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THE ARYAN PATH

Point out the "Way"—however dimly, and lost among the host—as does the evening star to those who tread their path in darkness.

—The Voice of the Silence

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GREAT IDEAS

[During the month of May all who love Wisdom will honour the memory of the Buddha, the Great One, whose Triple Festival falls during this month. Appropriately we print part of a sublime canto on the Self from the *Dhammapada*, a small but priceless book of the Higher Life. H. P. Blavatsky, whose anniversary, White Lotus Day, also falls in May, on the 8th, has written about the Holy One thus:—

"Without any claim to divinity, allowing his followers to fall into atheism, rather than into the degrading superstition of deva or idol-worship, his walk in life is from the beginning to the end, holy and divine."—ED.]

Let each man direct himself first to a suitable calling in life, and then let him instruct others. Thus a wise man will be free from worry. (158)

Self is the Lord of self; what higher Lord could there be? When a man subdues well his self, he will have found a Lord very difficult to find. (160)

The evil done by oneself, begotten of oneself, sprung from oneself, crushes the wicked man as a diamond crushes a hard precious stone. (161)

He, whose very evil nature has completely entangled him as a Maluva creeper entwines a sala tree, makes of himself that which his enemy would have him. (162)

Very easy is it to do that which is not good, and which is hurtful to oneself; exceedingly hard it is to do that which is beneficial and good. (163)

Evil is done by self alone, by self alone is one stained; by self alone is evil left undone, by self alone one is purified. Purity and impurity depend on one's own self. No man can purify another. (165)

Let no one overlook and abandon his own good practice attracted by the doing of good to another, however great. Once a man has discerned what is good let him be diligently intent upon it. (166)

RELIGIOUS EDUCATION IN INDIA

[The views of **Mr. K. G. Saiyidain,** long Director of Public Instruction in Jammu and Kashmir State and now Educational Adviser to the Government of Bombay, are entitled to respectful hearing. His stimulating and constructive speeches and articles have made a valuable contribution to educational thought in India.

With all that he says of the spirit of religion in this thoughtful essay, we are in full accord. It contains most valuable suggestions and we hope that our esteemed contributor will at least outline in another article the method of imparting religious education to children and youths of different denominations. Text-books written by persons sympathetic to all creeds will be almost the very first need. A graded series of text-books will have to be planned if education in Religion and Religions is to be imparted in the schools and colleges of the India of tomorrow.

This subject is important and we hope some at least among our readers will discuss it. We invite a full and free discussion.—ED.]

The future of Religious Education in India is one of the most contested and complicated of the educational issues in the country. The Central Advisory Board of Education has appointed, during the last few years, at least two committees consisting of distinguished public men and educationists who deliberated on this issue over and over again but could not come to any agreed conclusions, with the result that they could formulate no scheme or recommendations and the matter was shelved—a proof more of discretion than of courage! Recently, our Education Minister in the Central Government, Maulana Abul Kalam Azad, himself a great Muslim divine and a scholar of comparative religion, has re-started the controversy by expressing the opinion that religious education, in the proper sense of the word, should find a place in our educational system. Of course, that phrase "proper sense of the word" raises many difficult issues but before one can face them one has to deal with the position of those who are entirely opposed to religious education in *any* sense—proper or improper!—being imparted in schools. I can here refer briefly only to my own views in this behalf, more with the object of initiating discussion and elucidating the issues than of laying down any dicta that all may accept or working out the details of a practical scheme.

People object to religious education for a variety of reasons. There are those who are not prepared to accept Religion at all as one of the great values of life and to whom Religion is but an exploded myth, an old superstition that has out-

lived its day. With such people there is *no* common ground for argument so far as *religious education* is concerned. Then there are those who are not satisfied that, in a multi-religious country like India, it is possible—or desirable—to provide religious education in schools. They would rather leave it to the parents to look after this aspect of the child's education. Theirs is not an objection of principle but one of practical expediency, A third class sees no place for religious education in a secular state and is obsessed with what has been happening in India in recent years when communalism ran amuck and almost cost the country its freedom. A recent article by Dr. Paranjpe partly takes this attitude.

Perhaps it may be useful to try to clear away one or two of the misunderstandings implicit in this point of view. When we speak of a State as a "Secular State," what is really meant is that, in all public and political matters, the State will *not* ally itself to any particular religion and will not give preference to any group or individual on religious grounds. It does *not* mean that it is anti-religious or that it frowns upon the religious affiliations of its citizens. There is an obvious difference between a secular State as the Indian Constitution envisages it, and the *anti-religious* complexion, say, of the Soviet State in its early stages. So there is nothing intrinsically *wrong or illogical* in a secular State's making arrangements for the religious education of its children. Whether it is *possible* or *desirable* is a question that I shall examine a little later. So far as the argument based on the recent communal frenzy is concerned, it is a significant fact, worth remembering, that the political leaders and others who fanned this flame were *not* predominantly persons who had received religious education in their schools but those who were often quite indifferent to the religion that they formally professed. In the case of Muslims in particular, it may be said that some of the most influential organizations which always stood for communal peace and harmony were religious organizations like the Jamiatul Ulama-i-Hind! Nor is it a matter of accident that Mahatma Gandhi, the greatest apostle of communal harmony, was a deeply religious man who derived the inspiration for all his great and manifold work from his deepest religious impulses and beliefs. So it is a superficial view which would dismiss religious education on the apprehension that it would necessarily accentuate communal bitterness.

It is true that great crimes have been committed *in the name of religions* throughout human history—that in their name there have been intolerance, fanaticism, persecution, denial of intellectual and spiritual freedom, even destruction and death. But so have there been in the name of Patriotism and Culture and Science and it would be wrong to suggest that men and women should

eschew them on this account. What *is* reasonable is to demand that the distortions and misinterpretations which have come to cluster round these concepts should be swept away and that they should become valuable agencies for the enrichment, rather than the impoverishment, of human life. Just as education in history or geography or literature can be a repressive as well as a liberalizing influence (depending on how these subjects are tackled, and it is the business of the teacher and the Education Department to improve and reform the methods of teaching so as to get the most out of them), so it depends on *how* religious education is imparted whether it is to be a force for good or for evil. It would be unwise to suggest that these subjects should be dropped because they are often taught poorly. Similarly we cannot refuse to countenance religious education on the ground that there are special difficulties in tackling it satisfactorily or that it has been badly taught in the past.

Is it necessary, however, to insist that Religion be given a place of importance in this age of Science and the domination of Intelligence, when the common attitude is one of doubt and questioning rather than of faith ? Will it not be enough if we concentrate all our efforts on the releasing and cultivation of the human intelligence which might provide the requisite guidance to man in his everyday life ? Is it not true that the attitude of modern youth is one of scepticism rather than of faith ? To take up the last question first, it *is* true that modern youth is predominantly sceptical in its attitude. But we should go below the surface and try to find out the causes of this phenomenon. I can see two factors operating in the creation of this mentality. Our world has become much more complex and its urgent new problems—of democracy, capitalism, communism, slums and social injustices—confront our youth at every step. In this situation the simple dogmas of an earlier age offer no solution. Thus the sheet-anchors of the past, as presented to the youth formally, have ceased to convey any meaning to him. Again, he is consciously or unconsciously repelled by the dualism and the hypocrisy that he finds rampant amongst both the religious and the secular-minded people. While they profess to believe in " Thou shalt not kill " they organize mass slaughter on a world scale and men of religion are found supporting and justifying this criminal madness ! They pay lip service to the creed of " treating our neighbours as ourselves " and profess to believe that " all human beings are members of the family of God." But they have entirely different codes of conduct in personal, business, political and international life ! Honesty, fairness, compassion, lauded in private life (at least in theory) are often regarded as foolish in business and politics and criminally dangerous in international relations ! I have no

doubt that if great religious teachers like Buddha, Christ or Mohammad, with their message of love and peace, happened to visit this world, they would be regarded as dangerous anachronisms in this age! Little wonder then that the inexperienced youth is bewildered and loses his faith in the basic values of life—which all uphold in theory but flout in practice.

Will it then be right to banish Religion, either from life or from education, altogether? Or must it be recognized as one of the supreme values in life? Now, it is obviously impossible to give to this question an answer which can be proved logically or scientifically. But, speaking for myself, I am convinced that Religion is something which responds to certain fundamental urges of human nature. Man seeks for a firm anchorage of faith in this world of doubts and dangers and confusion of loyalties; he needs the conviction that life has a meaning and a purpose and is not the result of mere chance or "idle sport," that the pursuit of wealth and pleasure are not its highest objectives. Some people may not, of course, hear the call—many do not actually do so—but the best minds have done so throughout the ages and spirit has gone questing for the "Eternal Values." I am also prepared to concede that some people *have* been able to find their life inspiration in sources which are not normally regarded as religious. But such cases are rare and not typical. If we are thinking of human beings in general, we must come to terms with Religion as a valuable part of the permanent and ennobling experience of the individual and the race, and we must do what we can to make it work in harmony with our general life objectives.

If we fail to exploit the educative possibilities of religion, we shall be ignoring a very powerful force for good. The advice to abjure religion because it has been misused is, as I have already hinted, a counsel of despair. We cannot and should not reject any great treasure of the human heritage because ignorant or unscrupulous people have used it for unworthy purposes; we cannot reject Religion as such because it has often allied itself with reactionary forces or produced discord. No one has seriously made a demand for the rejection of Science because it has been used as a weapon of destruction! Again, the modern problem is not, to my mind, a search for an *entirely new* set of values and principles for life, for the world is not richer today in wisdom or charity or goodness than it was in the days of Buddha or Plato or Christ or Mohammad. It demands a reinterpretation and the presentation of values, including religious values, in modern terms and in relationship to modern problems so that they may help to solve the difficulties with which youth is faced, here and now.

There is undoubtedly a place for dogma and ritual also at certain

stages but, so far as school education is concerned, we are not thinking primarily of instruction in dogma which, in any case, offers great difficulties in mixed schools where children belonging to all religions are being educated. We should rather concentrate on bringing home to the children *the spirit of their religion* which is universal and stresses certain attitudes and values which are common to all good men and true, and which are their greatest spiritual treasure.

What, one may ask, are the characteristics of this *religious spirit?* In the first place, it is not something that relates to a particular aspect of our life and conduct but covers the entire domain—not business on six days and religion on the seventh and keeping the two from inconvenient contact! It is wrong to imagine that life is essentially a secular business with religion as a decorative afterthought. As the Prophet of Islam puts it strikingly, one should conduct oneself in such a manner as if one were really "living in a mosque" every moment of one's life!

This implies that religion should reject the dualism, the antithesis between the "world of matter" and "the world of spirit." The man of religion is not called upon to renounce the world and to retire into seclusion but to use all its great resources for the creation of "the good life" and the enrichment of the spirit. He should take an active and dynamic view of the place of religion in life—not a timid and apologetic view—and try to live nobly and adventurously in the name of the Lord for the good of his fellow-men and himself. The most considerable criticism against religion traditionally has been due to a pseudo-other-worldliness which failed to wage the good fight against the evils and injustices rampant in this world. But I see no justification for the adoption of such an attitude at all. The real protest of religion is against the identification of the *whole* of life with its material aspect.

Again, all religions, at their best, offer a revolutionary criterion for measuring the worth of an individual. A man is to be measured *not* in terms of wealth or position or family or race, not even in terms of knowledge or culture or artistic gifts, but in terms of *personal* merit, character and goodness—a criterion that cuts right across tribal, national, racial and class barriers and puts snobbery in its proper place. "And the most respectable amongst you in God's eye is he who is most pious" is the Quranic phrasing of this great religious truth.

And, finally, the basic attitude of a truly religious person is respect for human individuality and love for all mankind, because he realizes that all men and women are the repositories of the divine spark, however dim it may be. They have to be treated as *Ends* in themselves and not merely as *means* for achieving certain extraneous purposes. In showing our respect and affection for them and

our readiness to help them, we are really honouring ourselves and our God. We may certainly condemn the *crime* but we must have genuine compassion for the *criminal*. When the spirit of Religion permeates a person fully, he develops an all-embracing charity to which nothing that is human can be repellent. The practical side of this attitude of charity is the readiness for social service which does not ask : "What can I *get* out of life ?" but "What can I give or put into life ?" This attitude of charity is the source of all true, abiding and creative happiness, which Religion offers as the highest objective in life. Mahatma Gandhi offered, in his life and in his person, a very good example of this truth.

If my interpretation of the religious spirit is accepted, it follows that religion is not a matter of verbal profession—one *calls* oneself a Hindu or a Muslim or a Sikh and thereby becomes, *ipso facto*, a standing indictment of Hinduism, of Islam or of the faith that Guru Nanak of blessed memory preached ! It is a special kind of life to be lived—*not* a life of ease or comfort or of feeling superior to others but an exacting and strenuous life which grapples with the sorrows and sufferings and trials all round, without being embittered or losing one's compassion, idealism and faith in the eventual triumph of Truth, Justice and Goodness—a faith which even the Atom Bomb cannot crush and which can only be crushed if it degenerates into lip service and is not backed up by a life of noble endeavour. Does this seem like asking for a miracle ? It undoubtedly is, but it is a miracle which sincerity and faith can achieve and for which we can all work within our respective spheres and with our limited resources. And one can always entertain the cheering thought that God judges not the size but the *quality* of our offerings !

This is what Religion at its best stands for and what it has to offer, and the question is : Shall we be justified in constructing our educational mansion of many chambers without the illumination which Religion can provide ? The obvious retort to the question would be : Religious teaching does *not* provide all this—what is the good of asking for the impossible ? But does not that line of criticism apply almost equally to many other things we teach in schools—literature, history, art...? When I ask for a place for literature in the school curriculum, I am not advocating the cause of the "penny dreadfuls" but that of the most gracious and humanizing fruit of the human mind and imagination. When I ask that history be taught in schools, I do not want children to learn the stupid details of battles and the dynastic and personal squabbles of rulers but the fascinating story of how man has developed in many directions during the ages. Similarly, when I advocate religious instruction, I want to utilize the child's religion for humanizing him and initiating him into the

world of spiritual values. No doubt other subjects and activities will also help in this process but religion is directly concerned with the study of this field of experience and offers welcome aid which should not be rejected.

I am conscious of the many practical difficulties involved, even as I am of those which any other educational reform has to face. I realize, for example, that good teachers will be difficult to get—as they are for all other subjects ! I also concede that instruction in certain religious practices, which differ from sect to sect, may offer special difficulties and that that part might perhaps better be left to parents or religious organizations. But that does not mean that mere "moral instruction" divorced from religion and its fervent appeal, will serve the purpose. While it is largely true that all religions stress certain basic truths and moral values, each has its own approach and its special appeal for its followers. It would not be right to leave them out and, if, for practical reasons, the State finds itself obliged to do so, facilities should be given to enlightened religious organizations to cater for this side of the child's education.

One word more ! I find that, in the laudable attempt to eradicate communalism in politics, the curious idea is growing up that anything with which the name of any particular community or religion is associated is to be eschewed, that tolerance means that there should be no social or cultural or even religious associations or institutions specially connected with Hindus or Muslims or Sikhs or Christians. I doubt the soundness of that attitude. There can be no tolerance in a vacuum ; for there is no virtue in tolerating "nothing" ! One always tolerates *differences*. My conception of a genuine and strong tolerance implies a state of affairs in which differences of religious, cultural or political views will be allowed and tolerated with good humour, where clash of ideas will lead not to a clash of arms but to a clarification and a progressive development of thought and action—which is the essence of democracy—where, in schools as well as outside, Hindus, Muslims and Sikhs can be good Hindus, good Muslims and good Sikhs, appreciative of one another's cultural heritage as well as of their common Indian legacy, all proud of being Indians but not ashamed of professing their own faiths. To my mind any other kind of tolerance is weak and blind and obsessed with its own inner contradictions !

K. G. SAIYIDAIN

THE MEETING OF THE WATERS

AN ENQUIRY INTO THE INTERRELATIONSHIPS OF EAST AND WEST IN THE MYSTERY OF THE GRAIL

[A symbol was well defined by Madame H. P. Blavatsky as " an embodied idea, combining the conception of the Divine Invisible with the earthly visible." The search for the deeper meaning of the Grail symbol, upon which so much of Western poetic, musical and artistic genius has spent itself down the years, has intrigued many. Believing that " there is a logos in every mythos, or a groundwork of truth in every fiction, " we welcome the attempt made in this article, which we are publishing in two instalments, to trace the Grail symbol to its origins, thereby establishing another link in the chain binding East and West together.

Mrs. Hannah M. M. Closs is the author of several works of distinction, including *Art and Life, Tristan,* and *High Are the Mountains,* reviewed by Mr. Hugh I'Anson Fausset in our pages in May 1946. A sequel *And Sombre the Valleys* is to appear soon.—ED.]

I

Do not suddenly break the branch, or
Hope to find
The white hart behind the white well.
Glance aside, not for lance, do not spell
Old enchantments. Let them sleep.
' Gently dip, but not too deep. '
Lift your eyes
Where the roads dip and where the roads
rise
Seek only there
Where the grey light meets the green air
The hermit's chapel, the pilgrim's prayer.

—T. S. ELIOT

Short as is the above poem, and few as are the images it invokes, they conjure up an infinite world—whether it be the green valleys of Usk which gives the lines their title, or the dim forests of Broceliande—a world in which we may expect to encounter, at any turn of the path, the magic fountain of Owain's adventure, or catch between the trees a glimpse of Guigemer pursuing the fateful hart. Endless is the quest through the perilous wood. Dare we hope that, faint and doubting, we may reach at last, where the thicket lightens, the cell of Trevrizent, though the clouds still shroud the horizon that promised sight of the Grail ?

The quest is still unfulfilled—even for scholars.

Amongst those who have contributed most to the elucidation of problems relating to the Grail was the late Jessie Weston to whom Mr. T. S. Eliot acknowledges a profound debt in the notes to his *Waste Land.* In the book he particularly quotes, *From Ritual to Romance,*[1] as in other

[1] (Cambridge University Press, 1920)

of her works, she set herself the task of proving the actual existence of a definite Grail Mystery. It was her belief that an ancient fertility cult still discernible in folk ceremonies the world over, but having an esoteric spiritual meaning traceable in Hellenistic-Oriental mystery religions ultimately sublimated to a Christian gnosis, was transported by the foreign legionaries to the furthest bounds of the Roman Empire. Finding a congenial soil in the realm of Druidical lore, it was adopted by the Britons, though sooner or later its practice, on account of the violation of one of the "Grail" maidens, was relegated to the secrecy of the mountain fastnesses.

As in the East, this search for the ultimate Secrets of Life involved initiation and a test on different planes of existence. The text which Jessie Weston considers to reflect the earliest existing version of the Grail story[1] gives the description of such an actual test. The hero or rather the would-be initiate (he fails on the higher plane) is Gawaine. Gradually, however, what was originally the account of an actual happening was converted through the influence of Christian relics (Glastonbury and Fescamp) into a romance of which Perceval, whom she considers as a folk-tale character, originally unconnected with the Grail, becomes the hero. With Chrétien de Troyes and Wolfram von Eschenbach, the ritual myth, according to her, becomes purely literary.

In tilting against the adherents of the purely Celtic school Jessie Weston rightly warns us that visits to the Otherworld are not always derivations from Celtic fairy lore. Nevertheless, obsessed with the fertility aspect suggested by the dead king on the bier, the waste land, the sexual symbolism of lance and spear, she has hardly done justice to the divergence of certain versions from her accepted scheme. Their dismissal to a realm of literary fantasy and confusion remains unsatisfying. Is there really not a fundamental connection, for instance, between the seemingly conflicting versions which see the Grail now as a vessel, now as a jewel or a precious stone, and a deeper reason for the "introduction" of Perceval? Jessie Weston refused, as she herself admits, to be sidetracked down a bypath that can but lead into mists of a Celtic Twilight. It is possible that we shall have to venture into a realm of far deeper shadows to achieve the quest and explain the perpetual re-occurrence of images that seem to combine two distinct patterns, which, in spite of local and periodic divergencies ultimately reveal an underlying affinity. Then we shall learn too that the repetition of such symbols may not depend only on conscious borrowings and factual transmission but on a repeated upwelling from the unconscious of a forgotten herit-

[1] Wauchier in his continuation of *Perceval or Le Conte del Graal*, she maintains is here drawing from a version anterior to Chretien's.

age, whether in the individual or in the group.

What follow are but a few suggestions in that direction. For the purpose of our own enquiry it will be necessary to consult not only literature but the products of fine and applied art. Ideally, of course, such a study would have to embrace also the province of music.

One of the chief recurrent images of Celtic myth and legend appears to be that of a visit to or from the Otherworld. It is significant that the landscape thus conjured up so often bears the same or similar features which, though they appear in different combinations and not always all together, enjoy one basic peculiarity—that of a realm somehow detached from this present world. It may be described as at most times, or to all but a chosen few, invisible. It may be visibly cut off by ocean, river and lake, by mountain rock or by mist, or hidden within the mountain itself. Sometimes it can only be entered by the overcoming of a test or through the sustaining of a mortal wound. But always it is cut off by some barrier from the world of daily existence. Thus Tristan and Guigemer, wounded beyond hope of healing, are borne in a rudderless or fairy boat across unknown seas; thus in the lay of Ivonek, the lady following in the track of her elfin lover's blood, has to venture into the very bowels of the mountain to reach the fairy world on the other side. Owain has to perform the magic rite at the well and overcome its consequences. The castle of the Grail itself lies in a mountain fastness, beyond the ocean, on the bank of an impassable river, or by a mysterious lake. It is impossible in this short space to enter into all the variations, even of the Grail landscape. Enough to point out that from concepts as widely divergent as the barbaric raid to secure the magic cauldron in the "Harrowing of Annwn" in which the magic land is conceived now as an island fortress, now as a dim subterranean land, lighted by lamps, now as hell, to the Christianised mysticism of the *Perlesvaus*, the image is retained. It occurs most clearly in a reference in the *Book of Taliessin*[1]:—

> Perfect is my seat in Kaer Siddi
> Nor plague nor age harms him who dwells therein.
> Manawyd and Pryderi know it.
> Three utterances around the fire will he sing before it.
> And around its corners are ocean's currents
> And the fruitful (*i. e.* wonder-working) spring is above it
> Sweeter than wine the drink in it.

The resemblance to *Perlesvaus* is striking:—

La nef a tant coru e par jor e par nuit, issue com a Deu plot, que il virent un chastel en une isle de mer...Il esgarde desouz un molt bel arbre....e voit la plus bele fontaine....

We must consider now whether this land of youth, this magic realm

[1] *The Spoils of Annwn.* By R. S. Loomis. (*Proceedings of the Modern Language Association of America*, December 1941)

of plenty or spiritual bliss is after all so essentially Celtic.

If we turn to the field of art, we shall discover in Asiatic art countless examples, often in symbolic or conventionalized form, of mountainous peaks embraced by heaving waters. To this theme we shall return presently. For the moment let us limit ourselves to the representation, on so-called Byzantine reliefs, of a spring or a fountain entwined with foliage amongst whose fruits and tendrils perch birds, or from whose waters beast and bird may drink. Or again we have, as on a Sassanian metal dish, the tree itself flanked by two antelopes. At their feet is water that in many cases gushes from the tree's roots.

We are obviously confronted with the tree or fountain of Life. It is due to the research of the late Josef Strzygowski and Heinrich Glück[1] that we have been able to get a clear picture of the perpetuation of the Iranian Paradise, the Otherworld landscape which early Christendom borrowed (and adapted to its own purpose) from Mazdaism—that ancient religion in which nature expressed itself in symbols. It may long before have travelled with Celtic migrations to the West. Its roots lie buried deep in the Indo-European tradition. Is it surprising that the imagery is continually reborn in medieval legend both in West and East?

Franz Kampers,[2] in tracing the story of the Grail to Oriental myth and Arab legends surrounding the fabled figure of Solomon, points to numerous references and elaborate descriptions of the tree of life in the Garden of Paradise so frequently associated with stories of the Eastern Kingdom of Prester John. The tree which appears now heavy with luscious fruits, now sparkling with jewels, is even described as illuminated. As such it has strayed into the legend of the Grail itself, for instance, into a curious anecdote in Gautier de Doulens' *Continuation of the Grail*, where we hear how Perceval comes to a tree in which he sees a child who gives him no answer to his question concerning the Fisher King. Later he sees a tree illumined with candles which changes to a chapel. Kampers goes on to say:—

> Both trees are probably identical. The given explanation that the child climbed up and down the tree because it wanted to show Perceval how vast is the world, was scarcely needed to prove that we have here lit on the sun tree...whose boughs spread over the whole world.

The identification is proved by a passage in Robert de Borron's version in which Perceval again meets with a similar tree with two children at the crossing of the ways—or from

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[1] *Spuren indogermanischen Glaubens in der bildenden Kunst.* By Josef Strzygowski; *Die Christliche Kunst des Ostens.* By Heinrich Gluck. (Cassirer, Berlin. 1923). Both books contain numerous examples of the "Paradise" symbols.

[2] *Das Lichtland der Seelen und der Heilige Gral.* By Franz Kampers. (Cologne. 1916)

which issue forth the four streams of Paradise.

But the imagery seems to lead us further back. I could not but be struck by the strange resemblance that the incident bears to a legend from the *Bhāgavata Purāna*[1] in which the hermit Mārkandeya

> beheld on a peak of the earth a young fig-tree bright with fruit and leaves. On a branch thereof that looked to the North-East he saw a babe lying in the hollow of a leaf, consuming the gloom with his own radiance....Then the child drew a breath and Mārkandeya like a gnat passed into his body. And he beheld lying therein the universe in its fullness....As he gazed upon the universe, the child's breath cast him out...and he fell into the ocean of the dissolving world.

That the Paradise in which the Tree stands is often thought to be situated on the Cosmic "Mountain of the World" is proved by legend and art alike. Indian myth may have seemed remote enough and by many it may be considered a still farther cry to Buddhist Japan. Yet it is precisely here that we find several striking visual expressions of the Mountain, which, curiously enough, may throw some light on the Grail. For the moment we will consider only the Tamamushi shrine in the Horijushi monastery at Nara, on one side of which is depicted a most fantastic representation of the mystic mountain Meru. Encircled by coiling dragons which revolve it at its base, and rising in four tiers like a branching conifer, the mountain shoots into the heavens where, between two discs evidently representing sun and moon, fly winged creatures and genii mounted on the backs of birds. Beneath the lowest of the tiers or rocky continents, from each of which sprout shrubs and pavilions, appears a small temple in which the Buddha sits enthroned between two attendants or Bodhisatthvas. On either side of this subterranean temple stands a bird with sweeping plumage—perhaps a phœnix—surrounded by a flickering line. Surely the ancient Aryan image of the revolving universe has here been translated into the language of Buddhism. But if we recall the prototype—Vishnu's own mountain Meru around which sun and moon revolve, may we not also be reminded of Celtic lore—of Malduin's revolving island and the fortress of the solar hero Curoi; above all of the turning castles in *diu Krone*[2] and *Perlesvaus*, whilst in the Grail Temple described with such fantastic elaboration by Albrecht von Scharfenberg in the *Jüngere Titurel*, the dome was covered with blue sapphire and strewn with gleaming carbuncles, amidst which appeared the sun and moon, moved on their course by a hidden mechanism. But we are reminded no less of the magic column in Orgeluse's enchanted

[1] J. Strzygowski, *op. cit.*, Plate 127. Quoted by L. D. Barnett, in *The Heart of India*, (John Murray, London. 1924. P. 65 f.)

[2] A curious compilation of Arthurian and Grail romances by the thirteenth-century German poet Heinrich von dem Turlin of which Gawaine is the hero.

castle in Wolfram's *Parzival* which he himself maintains was brought by Klingsor from India—Feirefiz's land.

It is significant that the legend of Prester John once more provides a similar image. The turning palace and chapel which in the latter crown the terrace structure like the firmament are hence not absolutely dependent on Babylonian astrological monuments. As in the case of Arthur's Round Table, which, according to F. Kampers,[1] also revolved, Arab and Babylonian cosmogony and Semitic legend centring round the fabled treasure of Solomon may well have played a part in the development of the Grail romance, but the more we become conversant with the evolution of northern and Iranian art, the clearer will become the hidden Indo-European root, and possibly *roots even deeper*, from which that imagery has sprung. It was perhaps no mere stroke of artistic ingenuity that made Scharfenberg conceive his Grail Temple as a circular and radiating building.[2] The influence of Templar architecture may have played its part, but even so we are led back to the centralized form of the Armenian churches and thence to the Iranian Fire Temple. How this latter was conceived standing in the midst of the holy garden or Paradise may very likely be seen in the ornamentation of Sassanian dishes.[3] It is possible that the very concept of encircling the ritualistic procession around the venerated symbol ultimately derives from a primal stage in man's religious consciousness, whilst it has been suggested that this rotating movement in Aryan ritual, added to references in the Veda to the thirty days' dawn, points to the arctic origin of the northern peoples in the interglacial period.[4] (But it should be made clear that the term northern is here used without political perversion and not merely in regard to Indo-European tribes. Actually it embraces also the "Amer-Asiatic" and "Atlantic" races who may have migrated southward before them. Hence certain "northern" tendencies, for instance, in the art and culture of Egypt.)

In the far north where the sun does not rise high in the heavens but actually wanders *round* the earth[5] and is, moreover, for six months wrapped in darkness, dawn is not a daily phenomenon, but denotes the advent of a whole season. There the sun's rising may well be a source of physical and spiritual rebirth. Perhaps some such unconscious

[1] FRANZ KAMPERS, *op. cit.*

[2] J. STRZYGOWSKI, *op. cit.* Plates 205-207 reproduce S. Boisseree's architectural reconstructions.

[3] *Ibid.*, Plate 19.

[4] *The Arctic Home of the Vedas.* By B. G. TILAK. 1903; *Der Nordpol als Volkerheimat* By BIEDENKAMP. 1906.

[5] Strzygowski believes that the ambulatory and semi-radiating form of the fully developed Gothic apse may be attributed to the unconscious persistence of those original concepts.

memory is really reflected in the Veda where we read :—

She, the daughter of the sky, has appeared after, the young maiden in white robes....She follows the course of the Dawns that have passed away, the first of the endless dawns to come. ...Rise up. Living Life has come to us. The dark has passed away. The light comes. She has abandoned the path for the sun to go. We have come where men prolong their life.[1]

Incidentally it may be noted that the old English goddess of Spring, Eostre, has been identified by some with the Aryan goddess of the dawn.

Be that as it may, it is certain that long after any migration southward and the change to a diurnal phenomenon, the image of the rising sun persisted with such intensity that it was taken over from Iran by Christianity itself.

At the flaming of the dawn, when the gates of heaven are thrown wide... the Saviour rises out of the far East, the fount and habitation of Light.

The sun, therefore, the Light, the Radiance, may well have been conceived as the fount of Life itself.

At first such ideas may have been visualized only in abstract symbolism. In the course of time, however, the process of anthropomorphisation takes place. The sun becomes a deity, Sūrya, Mitra, Vishnu. But the primal concepts linger on. The light, the sun, is now a tangible object of a raid, a heroic feat, whether it be Indra's theft of the food-providing broth-pot or the expedition of Arthur and his warriors to Annwn, to the land of youth, to secure the pearl-rimmed cauldron which also possesses amongst other properties the reputation of being a vessel of plenty. Thus in the Veda we read how Indra transpierced the Gandharva in the limitless skies to provide nurture for his worshippers. "Out of the mountains he shot, held fast the ready-cooked broth. Indra let loose the unfailing shaft."

The springs of the Celtic land of youth abound, as we saw at the beginning of this essay, in wine and mead. In the Vedic Sun-realm we likewise find not only milk and broth but mead. The last, however, is often identified with the Soma—the draught of the immortals.

On the highest step of Vishnu lies the fount of mead. May I attain to this dear place, where men, devoted to the Gods, regale (inebriate) themselves; they the boon-companions of the wide-stepper.

This "third stride" of Vishnu—so often reiterated in the Veda—has given rise to much speculation. It is more than likely that the three strides refer rather to cosmic regions than to the time of day. The following Vedic hymn may offer suggestions. (Indu, incidentally, is a frequent epithet for Soma.)

Where light is perpetual, in that realm where the sun is placed, to that immortal world bring me, Pavamána; flow, Indu for Indra.

[1] *Translations from Vedic Hymns.* By E. Thomas. (John Murray, London. 1923)

Where Vivasvat's son is king, where the inner chamber of the sun (is), where the eternal waters (are), there make me immortal; flow, Indu for Indra.

Where in the third heaven, the third sphere, the sun wanders at will, where the regions are filled with light, there make me immortal; flow, Indu for Indra.

Where yearning and desire (are satisfied), there where the region of the sun (is), where delight and sustenance are found, there make me immortal; flow, Indu for Indra.

Where joy and pleasure dwell, and mirth and happiness, where the wishes of the wisher are fulfilled, there make me immortal; flow, Indu for Indra.

We are certainly in the "land of youth" but we may also call to mind Wolfram von Eschenbach's description of the Grail as "*der Wunsch von Paradis,...Erden Wunsches überval.*"

The Soma has often been related to the Moon (apart from which there seems no Moon-worship in the Veda). But we have already read of the Soma in Vishnu the Sun-God's highest step and the imagery here clearly points to the *sun's inner realm*. Thus Vishnu's highest step seems best to apply to the immortal realm of Light—is in fact a land of the immortal dead.[1] This is borne out by the fact that the Soma is guarded by the Gandharvas,[2] those strange creatures who can adopt bird or animal form, and who have at the same time been identified with the host of the spirits of the dead.

HANNAH M. M. CLOSS

(To Be Concluded)

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1 It may be noted here that in Heinrich von dem Turlin's *diu Krone* the Castle of the Grail is actually described as a realm of the dead.

2 *Die Wurzeln der Sage vom heiligen Gral.* By LEOPOLD VON SCHROEDER. (Vienna. 1910.)

PLANTS AND PERSONALITY

[**Patrick M. Synge, M.A., F.R.G.S., F.L.S.,** Editor of the Royal Horticultural Society's *Journal* and publications, was a member of the Oxford University Sarawak Expedition and also of the British Museum Expedition to the East African Mountains. He is part author of *Borneo Jungle* and the author of *Plants with Personality* and of *Mountains of the Moon*, a Travel Book Club, choice of the American Scientific Book Club. He gives us here a fascinating glimpse into the world of plants, so varied and all so beautifully adapted to their particular environment, but he does not tell us how such adaptations have been brought about. How far natural selection, the usual formula of science, may be assumed to account for them is examined in the Note which follows this article, to which the reader's attention is invited.—Ed.]

Many plants seem to me to possess a Personality of their own, although we must be careful to refrain from attributing to them an anthropomorphic character, from reading into their appearance or adaptation, the thoughts and desires of our human minds. Nevertheless the Personality of plants lies for me in their marvellous adaptations to their environment, the strange and bizarre characters which at first seem to us merely odd, but which fall naturally into place as we know more about them. I would like here to deal first with the character which is derived from the plant's adaptation to its environment and its methods of survival and then to turn to the feelings which the Personality of the plant may induce in ourselves, for there is no doubt that our whole life is influenced by the plants around us. We are completely dependent on them for the synthesis of energy from the sunlight and gases from the air and salts from the soil into complicated materials which we can eat. That is a never-ending miracle and one which even now scientists do not completely understand. Then there is the soothing and the peace which a garden of flowers can bring to a troubled spirit. This for me is probably unrivalled by the effect of any other external agency. I write external intentionally since I do not want to contrast the effect of an external occurrence with the internal peace or exaltation of the mind which may come from other mystical experiences.

I write here, high up in the mountains of the Alps, with the mists swirling around and yet as each gleam of sun comes through the clouds and lights up the meadows and the screes I never cease to wonder at the prodigality of the flowers which cover the ground in a carpet of brilliant colour and seem to live and flower more abundantly for their environment. Their adaptation to their environment is as extreme as

in any other range of plants. The characteristics with which they have to contend are the strong wind against which no big tree could stand and the very short growing and flowering season during which the ground is free from snow. During the long winter they rest dormant below the snow and little harm comes to them. The buds are ready formed before the snow melts and then in a few days from the melting of the snow they come into flower as the warmth unfreezes the ground and the melting snow provides moisture. Often the flowers come up through the snow, melting by the warmth of their own growth a hole through which the flower appears. This is especially true of the Crocuses in the very early spring and the delicate little Soldanellas. Many Alpine plants have been found to possess an extra strong concentration of sugars in their cell sap and this assists them both to survive the low temperature of winter and then to exert an extra strong osmotic tension through which water is drawn into the cells. Perhaps this is their most important physiological adaptation. Their anatomical adaptations are just as important. Their plant body is reduced to a minimum, sometimes no more than a tussock cushion clinging to the sides of the rocks while the root is very long and tough, creeping between the crevices of the rock, sometimes even enlarging and cracking the rocks as the name Saxifrage bears witness. Saxifrage in Latin means rock-breaker. Often a plant under an inch in height will have a root system several feet in length. The minimum of resistance is presented to the wind by the plant body while the maximum of anchorage is given by the root. Then the wind is used by the plants in their distribution of seed. A very large proportion of alpine plants have seeds that are adapted for distribution by wind. They may have long feather-like appendages like the Anemone or little miniature parachutes like the Dandelion and other Composites and these may travel long distances. Then a very large number of seeds are produced in one seed head so that a few at any rate may find suitable resting-places as opposed to the many which may settle on bare rock or other places where they cannot germinate. Every species of alpine plant is adapted to its own particular little micro-habitat and plant association and it is very rare indeed to find a plant growing out of its environment, be it meadow or scree or rock crevice.

The intensity of colouring among Alpine plants is noticeable to every visitor. There is no blue so shattering in its brightness and suddenness, so indescribable in its brilliance, as that of the little vernal Gentian. It is stronger than any man-made colour, while the blue of the rare little Eritrichium, the King of the Alps, is the very quintessence of the bluest of all skies, the sky of a summer evening when the sun is fast setting. They cannot but excite a wonder and an awe in us and the

more one knows about them the more wonderful do they seem. To me, in this mechanical age the qualities of invoking wonder and awe make a return to the plants of the mountains among my most valued experiences. The mountains, with their solitude from man and machines and their prodigality of flowers, bring an annual refreshment after a year's life spent in the cities, an experience which is the same, be the mountains Alps or Himalayas, Andes or Rocky Mountains.

At the opposite extreme lies the tropical jungle in which the prevailing tone is green and in which there is a prodigality of leaf and growth but in which one may walk for a day and see few flowers. Such tropical jungle, especially primary forest where the great trees leave less light beneath for the undergrowth, have also a majesty and a personality of their own, although in this case it is hard to distinguish the effect of any one plant. It is the effect of the whole and in the tropical forests I have never felt alone. Always there seems watching life around me, although this feeling of watching life conveys nothing of hostility. It is hard to describe in words. These jungle plants also have their adaptations to their environment, this time adaptations to an atmosphere saturated with moisture. The Orchids have aerial roots and an epiphytic habit so that each inch of space in the light is used. They literally perch like a bird on the branches of the trees, often a hundred feet or more above the ground.

Then it is noticeable that many of the leaves in the forest, particularly the young leaves, droop and have a finely developed and pointed tip from which drops of water fall at intervals. This may be considered as an adaptation which helps the plant to get rid of surplus moisture.

Then as we ascend in the tropics we come to that curious growth known as the moss forest in which the trees are dwarfed and everything is clothed in a thick carpet of soft damp mosses, an endless green sponge covering not only the earth but the branches as well, but not monotonous, as many of the mosses become orange and even crimson in their season while among them nestle many orchids and other exotic plants. This is the habitat of the giant Senecios and Lobelias of the East African equatorial mountains and also of the insectivorous pitcher-plants of Borneo and Malaya. I have been most fortunate in having seen both and there are few kinds of plants I have met which seemed to me to have more Personality, to seem more individual in their adaptations and appearance. Yet how marvellously fashioned they are! Here is the description of the first giant Senecio I met.

There he stood at a twist of the path, where it descended into a dip to cross a small stream by a rickety bridge; a veritable tree over twenty feet high, branched, gaunt, and with a certain pathetic, bizarre and indescribable look

of unreality as of an old man transported from another planet or age and set down to confront the present world. "Senex," indeed, means an old man, and these trees are veritable "Old men of the Mountains."

Later, as we ascended:

The trunks are twisted and contorted often into all manner of weird shapes, so that some become almost more animal than vegetable; they are surmounted by mops of foliage, like great lax cabbages. The leaves are very large, sometimes three feet in length, and of a rather fierce shade of metallic green. The old leaves do not fall, but remain attached to the tree, dangling as a dead, slowly-decaying mass around the trunk below the rosette. Sometimes they are so numerous that the whole trunk becomes a pillar of dead leaves with a central core.

Higher up in the Alpine moorland zone we found the giant groundsels flowering frantically. From the centre of the cabbage crown would emerge a vast spike, sometimes three or four feet high and branched repeatedly. The flowers of the higher species were very similar to those of the common English groundsel, except for size and number, but those of the lower species were always much more ornamental, having long rap florets (petals to the non-botanist) like the ragwort or yellow garden daisy. Some of these flowers would be an inch and a half in diameter, and one spike would bear a hundred or more, so that the effect was very striking.

Then the pitcher-plants of Borneo; here is a description of one of them. What marvellous workmanship have they developed!

Nestling against the tussocks of moss were the pitchers of the Nepenthes—Nepenthe, the old goddess of sleep and oblivion—and certainly it is oblivion for the many insects which find their way into the pitchers and are drowned there and slowly digested. The pitchers are beautiful; they are streaked and painted with a theatrical brilliance, their form designed by a Cellini endowed with a Machiavellian and wholly diabolical cunning.

The pitchers of *Nepenthes Veitchii* are large and resemble both in shape and colour the popular hybrid often seen in cultivation, and named after Sir W. Thistleton Dyer. It is a magnificent plant, a flamboyant beauty.

The pitchers are covered thickly with a down of pale pink hairs, while the lip of the mouth is prolonged upwards into a fan-like structure of extreme slipperiness, coloured with brilliant diagonal stripes of green and scarlet. They are often ten inches to a foot in height and four to five inches in breadth. Down the front from the mouth to the base are two fringed wings of pink or crimson hairs. The pitchers are borne on rigid stems which adpress them closely to the tree trunk. The stiff leaves also clasp closely round the trunk, as a man might clasp it with his arms.

Finally I would like to call to mind and leave with you the vision of the Magnolias, for they are perhaps my favourite genus, the flowers so beautiful in their purity and so thrilling in their size that one can never forget the sight of a fine tree of *Magnolia Campbelli*, the fine pink species of the Himalayas, or of *Magnolia conspicua*, the white flower-

ing species from the Chinese temples, and neither of these have I yet seen in their native habitats, but only growing in English gardens, where some of them have attained a great size.

PATRICK M. SYNGE

A NOTE ON THE ABOVE

Mr. Synge's approach in the above article is that of the true scientist, entering the temple of Nature with reverence, responding to the beauty and the mysteries of the plant world with wonder and with awe. His stimulating study does not go far, however, into the causes of the observed differences in character of genera and species.

"Natural selection," the popular formula of science since Darwin's day, describes fairly well the process by which the unfit are perpetually weeded out in the struggle for the means of subsistence and for security from environmental threats. Useful variations are obviously perpetuated by the surviving *élite* handing down to their descendants their organic characteristics. To explain many of the secondary aspects of organic evolution, moreover, physical causes, climatic, dietary, etc., may properly be adduced, but to explain the *origination* of the variations in the organisms themselves a deeper Cause, working in combination with those secondary causes, must be sought.

Can natural selection explain how the original modifications in composition and structure of the Alpine plants came about?—leaving aside the difficulties of accounting by it for the development of those flamboyant traps for insects which Mr. Synge describes, the pitcher-plants of Borneo.

The two chief rival schools of modern biology, Mechanism and Vitalism, are both partly and conditionally true, no doubt, but both are founded on false or incomplete premises. Mechanism posits soulless matter and nothing else, holding life to be an activity of a purely physical, chemical and materially analysable nature. It can account for highly complex neural and psychological responses, but it falls short of explaining the acts and motives of self-conscious man.

The Vitalist view, which has gained favour in recent decades, postulates a mysterious vital force *outside* of matter and controlling it, manifesting purpose, for example, through the power of regeneration possessed by plants and the lower forms of animal life.

Emergent Evolution, a third theory, is an advance on both Mechanism and Vitalism, while tending to do away with the contradictions between them. It rules out both soulless matter and superimposed intelligence, holding instead that, "as evolution proceeds, absolutely new possibilities arise from the com-

bination and permutations of originally existing potencies."

That our whole life is influenced by the plants around us, as Mr. Synge truly declares, becomes more comprehensible in the light of the ancient teaching of fertile and barren periods, when there is harmony or discord, respectively, prevailing between man and the lower kingdoms. When, it is said, the currents in the universal ether, in which every element is contained, "circulate in harmony with the divine spirit," our earth enjoys a fertile period.

The occult powers of plants, animals and minerals magically sympathise with the "superior natures," and the divine soul of man is in perfect intelligence with these "inferior" ones. But during the barren periods, the latter lose their magic sympathy, and the spiritual sight of the majority of mankind is so blinded as to lose every notion of the superior powers of its own divine spirit.

The nineteenth century with its predominantly materialistic science was such a barren period. It is encouraging that there has been in recent years a distinct trend away from materialism in modern scientific thought. The Pantheistic concept of a Universal Mind seems less impossible of acceptance as a hypothesis by the followers of science than it did at the beginning of this century. And it is in that concept, we believe, that the clue to the variation of species can alone successfully be sought.

Scientists like Sir Jagadis Chunder Bose, who demonstrated the existence of a "nervous system" in plants and an electrical rhythm corresponding to the heart-beat, have helped to bring nearer the wide-spread recognition of the truth which, as he said in his address before the Royal Institute in London in 1902, his ancestors had proclaimed on the banks of the Ganges thirty centuries ago:—

> Those who see but one in all the changing manifoldness of the Universe, unto them belongs eternal truth, unto none else, unto none else.

The ancient doctrine of the universality of life and consciousness, restated by Madame H. P. Blavatsky in modern Theosophy, is that there is One indivisible Intelligence which thrills through every atom. It is to this impersonal Intelligence, reflected in the subconscious intelligences pervading matter, that the variations can be traced. Madame Blavatsky writes:—

> The whole order of nature evinces a progressive march towards *a higher life*. There is design in the action of the seemingly blindest forces.

The very fact that adaptations do occur, that the fittest do survive in the struggle for existence shows, surely, that what is called "unconscious Nature" is in reality an aggregate of forces guided by intelligences of various grades. Under this doctrine, every plant has its own intelligence and purpose, feels and has a consciousness of its own. Every plant, moreover, has an elemental being of which it is the outward clothing.

To say that the plant possesses intelligence is not to claim that it has *human* intelligence or, indeed, a consciousness that man can comprehend, but only that limited phases of mental powers and functions as manifest in man are present in the plant—as they are foreshadowed even in the mineral kingdom. It is only to claim for the plant what one of the ablest zoologists in Great Britain, Prof. E. W. McBride, has claimed for the animal, that it "is not a mere piece of clockwork, but a centre of active striving. It rises up to meet the environment, and its effort alters its growth in every character."

But besides the force *in* matter, there is also a force acting *on* matter. The "patterning" habits of Nature cannot be explained without the concepts of archetypal forms and of impersonal guiding intelligences, agents of the Divine Mind, which in their turn direct the lesser "builders" or forces by which the design is carried out. As *The Secret Doctrine* puts it:—

> It is the "many" that proceed from the ONE—the living spiritual germs *or centres of forces*—each in a septenary form, which first generate, and then give the PRIMARY IMPULSE to the law of evolution and gradual slow development.
>
> Limiting the teaching strictly to this, our earth...there are centres of creative power for every ROOT or parent species of the host of forms of vegetable and animal life. This is...no "special creation," nor is there any "Design," except in the general "ground-plan" worked out by the universal law. But there are certainly "designers," though these are neither omnipotent nor omniscient in the absolute sense of the term. They are simply *Builders*, or Masons, working under the impulse given them by the ever-to-be-unknown (on our plane) Master Mason—the ONE LIFE and Law....That they work in cycles and on a strictly geometrical and mathematical scale of progression is what the extinct animal species amply demonstrate; that they act by *design* in the details of minor lives (of side animal issues, etc.) is what natural history has sufficient evidence for. In the *creation* of new species, departing sometimes very widely from the Parent stock...it is the "designers" who direct the new evolution by adding to or depriving the species of certain appendages either needed or becoming useless in the new environments.

The process is not always perfect; it shows gaps and flaws and even results oftentimes in evident failures, even sometimes in ludicrous manifestations, since those terrestrial spirits of Nature, who form the aggregated Nature, are differentiated, hence conditioned and imperfect. But the marvels which the processes of Nature so often achieve amply justify the reverence with which Mr. Synge approaches them.

A STUDENT OF THEOSOPHY

THE NATURE OF CREATIVE ART

[The article by **Shri K. S. Venkataramani** which we publish here, formed the major portion of the lecture that he delivered on January 22nd, 1948, at the Indian Institute of Culture, Bangalore, on "The Nature of Creative Art and the Function of Criticism." We omit here that portion which has already appeared in THE ARYAN PATH for January 1938, under the title "Criticism and Creative Art." Shri Venkataramani, besides editing the Tamil journal *Bharata Mani*, is well-known as a writer of English essays and fiction. Among his several books are *Paper Boats; Kandan, the Patriot* and *Murugan, the Tiller*.—ED.]

What is Life? What is Art? What is Criticism? These are questions that go to the roots of Life and Art. A careful and detached exploration of these processes will give us the very mystery of life, the pearl-like drop of dew that a blade of grass gives us in the morning sun. We know not how. None-the-less it is there to reflect in prismatic splendour the glory of the sun and the universe and the life that it bedecks.

If Life be the play called forth by the primal urge of evolution, Art is the great mirror that reflects this play of life and imprisons for joy and study the evanescent flow of life in its immortal mood. Art helps you in the same way in which a mirror helps you—enabling you to see yourself truly and well till you see All. Art and Criticism make the mirror to each other so that Life and Truth may be truly reflected and the Soul of Man led on proper flights to the footstool of God. So some of our greatest queries are centred round this grand inquiry into what Life, Art and Criticism are.

Let us first see what Art is, to know what Life is. Art, like Life, has one common messenger of God: Sound or Rhythm, the spoken or the written word. Even where the word is not the medium, Rhythm, the Soul of Sound, is the medium of all Arts. This Rhythm lies imbedded in Architecture, Sculpture, Painting, Music as well as Literature—as the Soul of Beauty. So Rhythm serves as the universal voice of all Arts and of Life.

Every Art has its own peculiar instruments of expression, through which the Rhythm is assembled and created. Architecture and sculpture work out the universal soul through hard and unyielding stones; painting, through fastidious colours; music through flimsy instruments or the difficult and taxing human voice; and literature through half-baked or hard-baked, overloaded and overused words. Literature has always to earn its life by the alchemic touch of the artist's own personality, changing the copper into gold and re-minting the words. Words either spoken or printed ultimately rely on the quality of sound and associative

ideas for their suggestive appeal to the mind and their literary quality. Sound, Vibration, is the original value as the source of creation, and the master craftsman in letters seeks to capture this rhythm through the sound value of words and the allusive enrichment they bring forth. The noblest passages of Shakespeare or Valmiki derive their vitality and suggestion of infinity mainly through the intricate or simple rhythm. The pure meaning of words in their individual or collective capacity plays but a very subordinate part.

Words, by birth, ancestry and tradition, are as hard as marble, and become smooth and shining only in the hands of a master craftsman. It is the problem of the personality of the creative artist to render this opaque material glowing and transparent by the transmuting touch of his own sincerity. Then only he liberates the imprisoned soul of the word and the soul of humanity. But what is sincerity? Feeling is its mother and its transmutation into another form at higher levels is thought. But, by a strange irony of fate, every time such conversion and storage take place in the intricate economy of human nature, the less powerful becomes the original impulse and the capacity to convert, in equal measure and with the same purity, feeling into thought. You become either a hardened cynic or a weakened sentimentalist. The creative artist, by his inborn *yogic* power, advanced still further no doubt by his own *tapas*, gains this magic power which is creative Art, to keep the feeling for ever fresh and unimpaired. Sublime thought is vision, like the flame that bursts from the fuel, and it gives one a glimpse of the rhythmic beats of cosmic life, the ultimate nature of reality, a glimpse of *Satyam* or God, the feeling of utter advaitic kinship with all life, the sense of perfect oneness. Pray remember that through all this intricate process of ascent of consciousness feeling is never extinguished. Once feeling is extinguished, the movement deadens, art languishes, words lose their magic touch and significance.

Let us then enquire why to man alone this strange gift of speech is given, why this choice blessing of words. Without it the animal kingdom lives a satisfied life, expressing in faultless style, though within a limited range, its own aims, passions and appetites. It is in order that man may lead a higher life. That he may widen the range as well as the quality of his consciousness, keep alive his receptivity, receive every kind of message in sunshine and in storm and, by sublimating his mode of experience, extend his consciousness till he knows the nature of reality. The gift of speech is an august step in evolution towards self-realization. The whole of life, from amœba to man, has been striving for this joy, craving for a perfect voice. For in its inmost heart it knows that vibration is life, that sound is *Brahmam*. To realize and to communicate however faintly that *Ananda* there can

be no apter instrument than the human voice. For words widen the range of *Swa-anubhava* and experience, create and involve the mind in a greater knowledge of itself. Hence it surrenders to the churning mind a subtler rhythm, a deeper vision of the *Atman*, of what is *Satyam* and imperishable. Feeling and sincerity carry this healing, renovating touch.

Let us now explore "words" from the point of view of authentic literary critics of the West. Sir Walter Raleigh in his famed essay on "Style" says: "A word is an operative symbol of a relation between two minds." This is hardly a complete definition, as it expresses only the objective relationship of the personality to the environment, and, as I will tell you later on, a great creative artist thinks of no audience; his Self, his inner Self, is the sole audience, and he writes for its joy and satisfaction. A word is as much a symbol of relationship between the Artist and his *Atman*.

How does this symbol operate? By associative memory, no doubt. But associative memory relies on conjuring up the reality behind a word only through the medium of sound vibration. Strictly speaking, every word suffers a kind of death every time it is used. And it is the problem of personality of the creative writer, or the literary artist, to change this ancient load of inheritance and uses into a golden symbol of something new, fresh and originating. That is possible only when there is some authentic experience in which the creative artist rejoices; he has to express that joy by charging this power into, and reissuing the old word with, a new stamp like a new king who has just ascended the throne.

Let us next explore what "Style" is. Just as a wall emerges out of bricks, style is the result of words. Buffon's definition, "that the style is the man" has all the merits which suggestive brevity always carries with it, especially when it is the nearest approach to Truth. It destroys the dual conception that is so fatal to a proper understanding of style, and reveals the mode of critical approach to it, emphasising the oneness of style with its matter. This definition keeps words in immediate touch with reality. Thoreau says:—

> Literary gentlemen, editors and critics think that they know how to write, because they have studied grammar and rhetoric; but they are egregiously mistaken. The art of composition is as simple as the discharge of a bullet from a rifle and its masterpieces imply an infinitely greater force behind them.

To Thoreau, style is an indivisible whole. Walter Pater says the same thing: "As a quality of style, soul is the fact" and truly the old idea that "Soul is form" is the key to the solution of the problem of style.

Sir Walter Raleigh says: "It is not what a word means but what it means to you that is of the deepest import." That is true. Surely the

vitality of a word depends on the degree of strength which you are able to project into it by your own personality. For purposes of trade and commerce and the inanities of daily life every word has no doubt a meaning attached to it almost as if it were by a statute. But it is really dead weight in the atmosphere of art unless the creative artist by his magic touch raises the dead and makes the word live by reflecting his soul.

Middleton Murry says that "a strong and decisive original emotion is the source of style." This would be true if not applied to the mode in which a writer assimilates his experience and returns it in art productions, but confined only to his choice of subjects. A decisive original emotion is valuable in selecting a particular subject and laying the plot and the foundations as best suits his experience. The decisive original emotion really decides only the choice of a subject and the birth of an idea in the vaguest forms of ecstasy like a racing cloud in the monsoon sky. It will not yield us the secrets of creative art.

Gustave Flaubert says: "It is impossible to detach the form from the idea for the idea only exists by virtue of the form." This is testimony indeed from one of the greatest and most fastidious and conscientious of artists. To a particular mode of experience as sensed and revealed by a creative artist every idea has only one word to convey it correctly and that is the unique word of Flaubert. It is not that the word is the same for all artists for all time. But to that personality, for every idea there is only one word, the unique word, to reveal the idea in its ultimate reality. So perfect is the fusion then between idea and form that it results in a perfect rhythm.

It is clear to my mind that the search for the word, the unique word of Flaubert, understood as above, is in essence the search for the vision of Truth. It is a search for reality, for *Satyam*. So sincerity eventually equates with Truth.

Creative art and Criticism are *one*.

To sum up finally: In any true view of great art, there is no audience except the artist himself. A master craftsman in his infinite absorption in his work, in his highest and loneliest hours of communion, never thinks of the audience. There is a complete annihilation of duality in the transcendental joy of *Swa-anubhava*, or self-experience and self-expression. The artist's soul is the audience as well as the auditor. Auditor and audience merge into one in the God-intoxicated, inspired artist. Matter and form become one. Sound and sense become one, as Kalidasa formulates the basic rule of literature and art in the opening stanza of *Raghuvamsa*. If these great conditions of art are not satisfied, the result is not creative art or literature, but mere commercial production, coming at its best under De Quincey's classification of

"literature of knowledge" and not of *power*.

Literary composition, all great art indeed, is one of the authentic modes of self-realization, releasing the flow of mind energy in rhythmic patterns, thus infusing greater tranquillity in human affairs. Art needs no ritual or ceremony but a profound sincerity of thought and feeling that detaches the gross body at the golden end of the pen and liberates the inner spirit of man to survey and comprehend to the full, and to compose the endless diversities and conflicts of life in this mysterious universe.

The great South Indian Sanskrit poet and statesman and Advaiti, Neelakanta Deekshatar's definition of the functions of art is the best to my mind and is quite in keeping with our own authentic traditions of Art and Life, always inseparable.

He says that "*Kavithai* itself is conceived as a *yoga-sadhana*." Self-expression in art is an authentic mode of self-realization—a yoga that transforms the mind energy into its higher forms till *ananda* is realized, a state where work is still dynamic but rhythmic, where the mind loses its lower accents and tones and acquires the higher. The restless, the predatory, the acquisitive and the selfish instincts of the mind are transformed into the peaceful, the non-predatory, non-acquisitive and selfless spontaneities of the soul and usher in a state and a society where the policeman is the individual.

Art conceived and executed as *yoga-sadhana* and not as shapely products for the gains of commerce, kills the *asura* qualities in man and liberates the imprisoned *Atma gunas* as outlined in the *Bhagavat-Gita*, thus slowly transforming the human into the divine in the ever-ascending spiral of human consciousness.

Art as *yoga* destroys the duality that erects the conflicting barriers and limitations of life and enables you to see the unity in diversity, the oneness of all life from amœba to man. This "vision splendid" is reached only when the restless and unsteady mind is slowly sublimated through rhythm, through the immersion of the mind in *Nadha-Brahmam* or rhythmic sound.

What is rhythm? Rhythm is the basic wand of creation. Rhythm is as creative as an atom bomb is destructive. The quest of all artists, the architect, the sculptor, the painter, the poet and the composer-musician is to contact on bended knees this goddess of Rhythm and have a glimpse through her of the nature of Reality or of God. For rhythm is vital to perception and vision. Rhythm gives the yogic mind, the mind without attachment, but still active in the wake of its duties; the mind which works but still desires not the fruits of action, the mind which does *nishkamya karma* spontaneously.

Pray, remember that Sound is the first-born of creation and Rhythm the first-born of Sound. Rhythm is the corner-stone of cosmic life. It is the root source of all construc-

tive energy which, in the *leela* or play of creation, interlocks itself into the rhythmic pattern and the till now impregnable fortress of the atom and the molecule, the vivid crystallization of energy into matter. Science, in the innocence of its ignorance of the true cosmic process, is seeking light and knowledge by the back staircase, knowledge of creation through destruction. But we are releasing this imprisoned energy in the atom through the wrong way.

Flood water, if canalized, irrigates; otherwise it inundates and destroys. Atomic energy as released through science is destructive; released through art as a *yoga-sadhana* it divinizes the ascent of man and the whole of life.

In conclusion—Rhythm is as creative as the atom bomb is destructive. It is an enrichment of the totality of consciousness and not a mere accumulation of cyclopedic knowledge. Creative art is a *yoga-sadhana* whose highest fulfilment is in the Path that it shows towards self-realization. Self-expression based on rhythm and *Swa-anubhava* gently takes you on to self-realization, like the river to the sea, for all her lazy windings. That is why rhythmic activity based on self-experience is so vital to the individual. It never destroys, but integrates. So truly *Kavithai* is a *yoga-sadhana* and the test is, it should take you to the footstool of God—give you *Brahma-Gnayanam*, self-realization, the Highest Knowledge. Otherwise it is not creative art.

Art and Criticism, under this selective conception of a great ideal, become the noblest striving of man, work that is worship at the most exalted level, seeking Divine Grace and Joy in a dynamic daily surrender.

I already see the faint streaks of the day struggling against the heavier darkness of early dawn. I feel sure that we will soon learn to release the atomic energy in rhythmic patterns of love, spreading over the diverse races of the world now in conflict, chaos, sorrow and suffering—but not without the help of a free India, the cradle-land of religions and civilizations. The world will learn the way to true peace and love only when India takes her rightful place among the nations and assumes once again her cultural and spiritual leadership in human affairs. Atomic energy released by the poet and the yogi and not by the scientist will save the world.

K. S. VENKATARAMANI

THE LOGIC OF THE LOIN-CLOTH

[**Shri Gurdial Mallik,** long connected with the Visva-Bharati at Santiniketan, is a frequent and valued contributor to our pages. Contentment with little, the voluntary renunciation of the non-essential, has long been recognised as helpful to aspirants to the spiritual life. It is, however, all the spirit, the inner attitude, with which possessions are renounced or held that counts. Saint Francis's "Lady Poverty" and the benevolent Lakshmi are not opposed. Renunciation is, indeed, sometimes an easier course for a man than holding in trust and administering wisely the wealth which under Karma is his. Simplification of life is good but, as the Buddha wrote: "Even though a man be richly attired, if he develops tranquillity, is quiet, subdued and restrained, leading a holy life and abstaining from injury to all living beings—he is a Brahman, he is an ascetic, he is a Bhikkhu." This article was written before the tragic death of Gandhiji.—ED.]

Every nation has its own logic of life and not seldom it is summed up in a symbol. Thus, there is a series of such systems of thought: the logic of the Fire, the logic of the Flute, the logic of the Lotus, the logic of the Lyre, the logic of the Cross and the logic of the Crescent.

There is, however, one particular point of view which is common to all these various philosophies. It is the stress on "circular" simplicity. And it is this aspect of the logic of life to which the writer of the present short essay would like to give the name of "Logic of the Loin-cloth."

In the modern age Gandhiji is the principal exponent and example of this special school of logic. He has taken to it chiefly under the compulsion of the complexities and confusions of the times in which he lives, though today he is *en rapport* with it; nay, in raptures over it, it having become the very breath of his being. What does the loin-cloth stand for? The best way to answer the question would be first of all to eliminate what it does not signify. What is farthest from its connotation is the concept of the *pseudo*-logic of the loin-cloth, illustrated in the life of the ascetic who, to save his loin-cloth from the ravages of rats went in for a cat to kill the rats, then for a cow to supply milk for the cat and finally for a plot of land in order to grow grass for the cow. The result was a concatenation which changed overnight his so-called independence of the world and its ways into a slave-like dependence on it. For, as the conclusion of the story in question has it, the ascetic was not content only with the growing of grass for the cow; before long he became a cattle-holder as well as a cash hoarder!

The *real* loin-cloth represents a certain set of values. First, the

acquiring or owning of only such possessions as are indispensable to the fulfilment of one's own *dharma;* secondly, some honest labour with one's own hands for morally earning one's bread by the sweat of one's brow, irrespective of other avenues of income; thirdly, intellectual integrity; fourthly, synthetic spirituality; and fifthly, an undying faith in the perfect justice of the Divine Law in its million-faceted, manifest working, despite the apparent contradictions thereof in the outer world.

Now, Gandhiji's life is an unending effort to express these ideals. He has no wardrobe, and no bank balance. He has his spinning-wheel. His honesty of purpose is proverbial, though often people do him grievous wrong by mistaking his "inconsistency" (as they call it) between what he said or did yesterday in the light of truth as he knew it then and what he says or does today, having come upon some additional data during the intervening twenty-four hours for carrying on his continuous experiment in the laboratory of Truth. His Rama is no longer the Ramachandra of Ayodhya and of the Hindus; his Rama is of all, for all and in all. Notwithstanding the presence and performance of what is not good in the world around him, his faith in the goodness of the Good Law persists almost to the point of his proclaiming, "Vasudeva is everywhere."

Once India's present Premier, Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, in a flash of ideological inspiration, characterized *khadi*—the hand- and home-spun cloth,—as "our livery of freedom," though it is a matter of shame and sorrow that today that livery has been stained with blood shed by brothers. In the same way, the loin-cloth may be described as the livery of simple, sincere, severe, strenuous, spiritual and synthetic living in the service of humanity—in short, the loin-cloth is the livery of Life (with a capital L).

Our artificial and artifice-loving civilization, atomized and egoistic, machine-made and money-mad, must sooner or later turn the corner. Then the hour will strike for humanity's taking earnestly and intelligently to the logic of the loin-cloth in solving the problems and perplexities of individual as well as of collective existence.

For the logic of the loin-cloth is the logic of Life, lived *alfresco*, open to the four winds of Heaven, informed with the fragrance, the freedom and the fullness of the soul, and in the perpetual presence of the ever-awake Eternal.

GURDIAL MALLIK

NEW BOOKS AND OLD

THE RUSSIAN MESSIANIC IDEA *

This is a luminous and illuminating book which will add to the great international reputation of its author, not in this case as the interpreter of history, but rather as the spiritual diagnostician of the Slav soul. And as it is apparent that we have to share this terrestrial globe with some hundred millions of Slavs, it is important that we should strive to understand the forces which animate and shape the Soviet lands to-day.

Russia, says M. Berdyaev, took in the eighteenth century a rehash of Voltaire, and he ends a brilliant historical sketch with these words of St. Alexander Nevsky: "God is not in power but in truth," adding, "The tragedy of the Russian people lies in the fact that the Russian authorities were not true to those words."

The central thought that preoccupies this philosopher as he contemplates his own people is their messianic character, their innate religiosity. "Messianism," he writes, "is almost as characteristic of the Russian people as it is of the Jews." He stresses, too, the contradictions of the Russian character, its savageness and gentleness; its simplicity, its complexity. And he finds in some part the explanation in the situation of Russia between East and West at the confluence of two streams of world history, observing:

> The Russian people is not purely European, and it is not purely Asiatic. Russia is a complete section of the world—a colossal East-West. It unites two worlds, and within the Russian soul two principles are always engaged in strife—the Eastern and the Western.

He sees the quality of the Russian soul as the reflection of the immensity and amorphousness of the Russian land—the absence of categories, the blurred social outline from which elements rise and burst like bubbles that are the resolution of spiritual distresses, of an abiding *weltschmerz*.

This examination of the "Russian Idea" is localised in time in the nineteenth century, "the century that achieved interior freedom," the century that "was a period of intense activity in spiritual and social enquiry." And, again, quoting Chaadaev, the first Russian philosopher of history:—

> We do not belong to one of the great families of the human race; we do not belong either to the West or to the East, and we have no tradition either of the one or of the other. Standing, as it were, outside time, we have been untouched by the world-wide upbringing of the human race.

Thus Russia, it seems, offers an unknown potential, since her future can not be predicated by a reading of her past. We cannot say that her source is Athens or Rome, or ancient Cathay. She is, as it were, *sui generis*.

Contemporary with Chaadaev was that remarkable Russian, Pechovin, who became a Roman Catholic monk and who foretold, with prophetic insight, the trend of the world, namely,

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* *The Russian Idea.* By NICOLAS BERDYAEV. (Geoffrey Bles, London. 18*s*.)

that mankind moves towards a tyranny over the human spirit from which there will be no shelter anywhere. "Pechovin believed that Russia, together with the United States, will inaugurate a new cycle of history" which is a thought for Messrs. Stalin, Vyshinski and Molotov.

Those chapters of this book which deal with the great literary figures of the last century that arose in the Russia of the Czars are about as fascinating as may be imagined. And often it is by the little anecdote that this author throws the bright light upon his subject which illuminates character as no detailed analysis can do. For example, that which he tells of Belinsky, as Turgeniev told it, of the all-night session after which some one talks of food and Belinsky cries, outraged: "We have not yet decided the question of the existence of God, and you want to eat!"

M. Berdyaev places Belinsky among the first of those who shaped the soul of nineteenth-century Russia; Belinsky, who asked why it should be more absurd to believe in the Kingdom of God than in man's power to achieve an earthly Utopia. No Western cultural influence, writes M. Berdyaev, transcends that of Hegel, whose philosophy receives still the imprimatur of the contemporary godless U. S. S. R. State's approval; which is curious, since Hegel's notion of philosophy was the idea of God.

Space precludes any detailed references to the analyses of the characters of the great literary figures of the nineteenth-century Russian scene, of Tolstoi, Turgeniev and the rest. They personify that which most distinguishes the Slav soul from the rest of humanity, namely, its preoccupation with sin and salvation, its capacity to suffer, its will to aspire. All these were, fundamentally, profoundly religious men.

In particular, Dostoyevsky, who emerges as the prototype of the contradictoriness of the Russian character, swinging from the extreme Left to the extreme Right, and emerging in the end as a theocrat. These analyses are not literary valuations so much as estimates of the reactions of great literary men to their social environment. It is interesting to learn that Dostoyevsky foretold the coming of Communism; that he linked the metaphysical depths of the Russian conception of social justice with Russian messianism. It is indeed strange that a people so saturated in religious feeling should have erected the first Godless State on earth.

Of the Soviet of today, M. Berdyaev has this to say:—

> This messianic idea of Marxism which was connected with the mission of the proletariat, was combined and identified with the Russian messianic idea. In the Russian communist revolution it was not the actual proletariat of experience which was in control but the idea of the proletariat, the myth of the proletariat. But the communist revolution which was also the actual Russian revolution was a universal messianism, it aimed at bringing happiness and liberation from oppression to the whole world. It is true that it established the greatest oppression and annihilated every trace of freedom, but it did this under the sincere impression that this was a temporary means which was necessary in order to give effect to its highest purposes.

Because it denies the worth of the individual man this system stands condemned, in the view of this great thinker, as in the opinions of millions of lesser men.

GEORGE GODWIN

Albert Schweitzer: The Man and his Mind. By GEORGE SEAVER. (Adam and Charles Black, Ltd., London.)

There are several biographies of Dr. Albert Schweitzer, who is probably the world's greatest many-sided genius of the present day. Last year alone there were three books published and this one is one of the best I have read. The first part deals with Dr. Schweitzer the man and his work in various fields and the second part is a searching analysis of his philosophy as revealed in his writings. The first paragraph more or less summarises the book:

> Albert Schweitzer is probably the most gifted genius of our age, as well as its most prophetic thinker. A Doctor four times over —in philosophy, in theology, in music, and in medicine— he was earning three of these distinctions while in his twenties, at an age when most men are still serving their apprenticeship in one; and for him they are but incidental to the classic contributions which he has made to each of these subjects. What is rarer still, his practical achievements and manual skill have kept pace with his scholarship: a surgeon, a self-taught architect and builder, an agriculturist, an organist and a consultant in organ-craft, he has further proved his ability as an administrator in founding, organizing, and maintaining a hospital in the tropics. As an independent thinker, he foresaw the collapse of Western civilization at a time when sociologists were confidently heralding its advance, and at the same time he was proposing a deeply-considered remedy for its eventual restoration.

Dr. Schweitzer has compressed into his life the achievements of four or five lives. He had unbounded energy. Like Napoleon, he could go on for days with the minimum of sleep. He was thorough in whatever he undertook. As a theologian, in addition to holding a doctorate degree, being pastor of a church and principal of a theological college at Strasbourg, his *Alma Mater*, and writing books, he found time for music, in which he was one of the top-notch men and one of the finest interpreters of Bach. He was invited all over Europe to give demonstrations in music. He was so thoroughgoing that he would not play on an organ unless he had spent hours in getting acquainted with the instrument. He loved the fine old organs of Europe and it was a labour of love for him to clean, dust and repair those on which he was to play and he brought out the best that the organ was capable of producing.

As a philosopher, he is one of the best interpreters of Immanuel Kant. His books, such as *The Quest of the Historical Jesus, Paul and his Interpreters* and *Civilization and Ethics* prove to us his catholicity of taste in philosophy. In his later years, amidst pressing hospital work and hospital building, he found time to delve into Indian philosophy and to write *Indian Thought and Its Development.* Dr. Radhakrishnan devotes a whole chapter to refuting Dr. Schweitzer's ideas but George Seaver says that Radhakrishnan's criticism of Dr. Schweitzer's appraisal of Indian thought is based on a misunderstanding :—

> This is not by any means to claim that Schweitzer is always right; he would be the first to admit that his ideas are open to correction. When his friend Father Andrews, acknowledging the fairness of his conclusions as derived from a study of Indian sacred texts, urged that personal contact with India itself might modify them, Schweitzer answered: "You have lived with the Indians, I have only read about them; your judgment is perhaps the truer."

When Dr. Schweitzer determined to go out as a missionary to Lambarne in Africa, most of his friends thought that he would be burying his talent in Africa. But subsequent events have

proved that Africa gave this great man the opportunity to bring out latent qualities.

His work in Africa was uphill work. His mission-board did not fully back him up. He had to fight the native superstition against Western medicine. He had to build his own hospital. The people among whom he worked, somewhat like us in India, considered all manual work *infra dig.* Seaver quotes his own words :—

> In the middle of September we get the first rains, and the cry is to bring all the building timber under cover. As we have in the hospital hardly a man capable of work, I begin, assisted by two loyal helpers, to haul beams and planks about myself. Suddenly I catch sight of a Negro in a white suit sitting by a patient whom he has come to visit. "Hullo! friend," I call out, "won't you lend us a hand?"
>
> "I am 'an intellectual' and don't drag wood about," came the answer.
>
> "You're lucky," I reply; "I too wanted to become 'an intellectual,' but I didn't succeed."

He had to find his helpers, both doctors and nurses. Some of them, though enthusiastic, did not have the robust frame of Dr. Schweitzer to stand the rigours of the African climate.

His interpretation of Christ at Ogowe had to be different from what he had learnt in Germany. He taught that Jesus was a man of his time with a limited mind and understanding. He preached Jesus as a new influence who prepared men for an ethical interim period to anticipate the future. Schweitzer preached and practised a new "reverence for life." This reverence he showed not only to birds, monkeys and deer but also to trees.

Dr. Schweitzer is a truly great man and George Seaver's book gives us a further insight into his life. The book is well worth reading by every one.

K. APPASAMY

Mass Man and Religion. By E. G. LEE. (Hutchinson and Co. (Publishers), Ltd., London. 16*s.*)

This is not an easy book to read. Again and again the reader finds himself compelled to reread whole passages to get a clear idea of what the author is trying to say. This is partly due to a certain lack of lucidity in the style, partly to occasional misleading punctuation, but probably most of all to the fact that the author is still struggling to clarify his thesis to his own mind. One feels as one reads that one is listening to a mind thinking aloud rather than presenting clear-cut conclusions. This, though it makes the reading difficult, detracts not one whit from the worth of the book. Indeed, it rather enhances it and any reader who genuinely makes the effort to read and understand will not go unrewarded. On the contrary, he may well feel, with this reviewer, that he is reading the most important and significant book that he has read for a very long time.

Put briefly, the central thesis of the book is this: Mankind, not for the first time, has reached a major crisis in its history; old, long-satisfying myths have become untenable and the old ethical sanctions have lost their binding force; men, restless and unhappy, missing they know not what, either turn to the invention of new myths in their endeavour to conserve the truth behind the myth; or, shutting their

eyes to the truths which have caused the crisis, they cling blindly and stubbornly to the old myths which have become unintelligible and incredible to the majority. The latter is what organised religion, always the conservator and custodian of old things, tends to do. This is what organised Christianity is doing, for the most part, in the Western world. But these old myths and formulations no longer have significance for the average man today, and so the churches get steadily emptier and men in their thousands, seeking for something to take the place of the old myths, invent new ones. And since the outstanding characteristic of modern man, as compared with his forebears, is his consciousness of himself as part of a community, or a cog in a great machine, rather than as an individual, inevitably the new myths take the form of community and State. But religions with these myths as their centre are self-destructive, like all idolatrous religion. For idolatry means the worship of the symbol instead of the thing symbolised. The State or the community, as an object of worship, is as horrible and devouring a monster as any of the "false gods" of old. It demands the utmost heroism and sacrifice from its worshippers, not in the interest of some absolute value which it symbolises, but in the interest of its own life and being.

It is this loss of the sense of something ultimate and absolute behind the myth, that is the prevailing spiritual disease of the modern age. Man has lost touch with the intangible and the infinite and it is this which has led to the wide-spread feeling of "dis-ease" and uncertainty "as if, somehow, with all his mighty powers, modern man has lost his way." He tries to get rid of the feeling of uncertainty by plunging deeper into community life, seeking more and more to identify himself with the mass and to believe that only the simple factual things are real. But without success, for "life's essential problems lie beneath personal relationships," and are not simple and factual but complex and intangible. Only in the depths of the individual spirit can a real understanding of the mystery of life be obtained. And there, in the lonely grandeur of the individual spirit, must contact be made with the Absolute which is behind all myths.

It is impossible in a short review to do justice to this book—its surging pressure of thought, its heroic refusal either to turn back to the old securities or to admit defeat, the forceful and reasoned logic of its arguments, and above all the mystical insight which sees through and beyond the problems of the present—all these things will carry their own message to the reader.

Perhaps the following paragraph may be allowed to summarise the author's thesis in his own words:

> The occasion of crisis cries for the triumph of faith, and faith within crisis must always construct the utterly new. There is no way back, for what existed in the past has been destroyed in its historic form; there is only a way forward to the future where a new historic form with a new range of spirit must be created to possess the new vision of the Absolute.

MARGARET BARR

Science Today and Tomorrow (Second Series). By WALDEMAR KAEMPFFERT. (Dennis Dobson, Ltd., London. 12*s.* 6*d.*)

Living under the shadow of future atomic warfare men today frequently decry the impact of science on their lives and assign the blame, for what is really due to their own shortcomings, where it in no way belongs.

Only the ignorant deny the debt that modern civilization owes to scientific invention. Without the blessings of technical and industrial development we should still be living in the literal "darkness" of the Middle Ages. It is only because of what science has accomplished that the ordinary working-man's home of 1948 possesses many luxuries that a century ago were denied to Kings.

The impetus of war has, undeniably, always brought about an amazing speed-up of invention. Ideas that in peace time lie dormant for lack of capital are, during war, financed and exploited by Governments which never suffer from shortage of money when instruments of death are needed.

At the same time it would be wrong to believe that it is only war that causes inventions to be made. There is ample proof that scientists, international in their outlook, are determined that they will resist the pressure of war-mongers, and are already uniting to try to prevent attempted misuse of their discoveries.

In this book Waldemar Kaempffert has outlined the influence of war on research, industrial and social life. Not only does he review the past scientific discoveries which gave us our great industries, many of which originated during the stress of war, but he has also looked to the future and from the inventions of today forecast some of the developments of tomorrow.

Science has made us *blasé* in that we take so many of the wonders of life for granted. But we are savages in comparison with the man of the future. Kaempffert paints a delightful picture of the home of 2050 when the magic wand of "synthesis" has transformed our lives. House-cleaning by hose indoors and out, suits of synthetic material pasted together with waterproof cement and fireproof fabrics of every kind offer the housewife a care-free life.

It is a favourite pastime of popular scientific writers to predict the life of the future and this book is a useful addition to former works. The chapter on "Science and World Unity," however, seems the most thought-provoking, formulating as it does the design of a World Scientific Commission with the "deliberate purpose of raising all countries to a single high economic level, of giving all peoples a common outlook and preparing them for the acceptance of a single political order."

Kaempffert's ideas are worth closer study. His scheme might well be the only logical outcome of an association of scientists driven by governmental demands to unite in refusing to prostitute their talents. The possibility of abolishing war by law is surely fantastically remote!

A. M. Low

The Personality of Man: New Facts and Their Significance. By G. N. M. TYRRELL. (Pelican Books, Harmondsworth, Middlesex, England. 1*s.*)

"Normal consciousness" might well be substituted for "consciousness" in

defining psychical research as "the scientific study of human personality beyond the threshold of consciousness." The. value here claimed for psychical research as an antidote to materialism is incontestible, challenging as it does through its discoveries in the paranormal not only the uniqueness but even the centrality of the material universe.

Something apparently transcending space and time is found working in man's personality, of which genius and mystic realisation are among the higher expressions.

Mr. Tyrrell's compendious survey includes the laboratory experiments with their evidence for extra-sensory perception and non-inferential foreknowledge, but he also recognises that non-metrical experiments, if the type of inquiry demands them, can be no less scientific. Nature may be questioned but not coerced and "we can have the customary type of scientific control only at the price of paddling in the shallows."

He is quite open-minded but so fully convinced of telepathy that he tends to overwork it as the explanation of extra-sensory perception and foreknowledge, sensory hallucination and mediumistic communications. He is, moreover, predisposed towards communications from the dead to explain the last-named, while conceding the possibility of other explanations. He cites cross-correspondences in automatic writing that seem indeed to point to a directive intelligence behind the scenes, but to its nature the investigators are without a clue.

Mr. Tyrrell castigates the general scientific resistance to facts that will not fit into the existing scheme:—

> One might have expected that, to a man endowed with true scientific curiosity, the merest hint of telepathy would act like the scent of battle to a war-horse. But the scientist does not behave in the least like a war-horse. He behaves much more like a mule: neither pushing nor pulling will move him.

But if the scientist is blinded by his preconceptions, is not also the psychical researcher who denies any serious flaw in his group's records? Dr. Hodgson as a young man made a complete fiasco of his *ex parte* examination of the phenomena deliberately produced by Mme. H. P. Blavatsky. Underwriting by his blanket endorsement Dr. Hodgson's prejudiced report, Mr. Tyrrell is logically forced to omit Mme. Blavatsky's writings from his extensive bibliography and to forgo the clues to his puzzles which they offer. Among those clues may be mentioned:—

(1) The Astral Light, a supersensuous medium surrounding and interpenetrating the earth, the medium for telepathic interchange and the register of past and present—and even future in so far as the causes of future effects are already determined—a factor necessary for the explanation of foreknowledge as also of psychometry.

(2) The astral body of man, interpenetrating the living physical body and surviving it for a time as the shell, in turn cast off by the real man but retaining a record of his life which can be tapped by mediums and sensitives.

(3) The dual nature of man, mortal and immortal, many mediumistic communications of the higher type being ascribable to the medium's higher nature.

(4) A dual set of senses, physical and superphysical.

(5) The inaccessibility of the immortal man, in a subjective state between his lives on earth.

(6) The possibility of deliberate direction of occult forces by the trained will.

(7) The grave dangers of physical mediumship especially and of forcing the development of paranormal powers, as by inducing, as Mr. Tyrrell proposes, "the right psychological conditions in the most promising types of individual": Mr. Tyrrell is wrong in blaming sensitives for their reluctance to submit their powers to test.

On the whole, however, this book of nearly 300 pages is outstanding for instructiveness and clarity and for the author's open-minded attitude—up to a point.

E. M. HOUGH

The Secrets of the Heart: Selected Works. By KAHLIL GIBRAN; translated from the Arabic by ANTHONY RIZCALLAH FERRIS and edited by MARTIN L. WOLF. (The Philosophical Library, Inc., New York. $4.75)

Who can reveal the secrets of the heart? Perhaps, Love. But it is the very nature of Love to express itself through self-effacement! The throbbing heart, Kahlil Gibran writes, is like a "bird flying in the spacious sky of love....It is like a vase replenished with the wine of the ages that has been pressed for the sipping souls."

And, finally, there is the inexhaustibility of affection akin to that of the apparel of Draupadi—that symbol of the spirit and sanctity of Love.

But, Kahlil Gibran says also:

> The secret of the heart is encased
> In sorrow, and only in sorrow is
> Found our joy, while happiness serves
> But to conceal the deep mystery of life.

In the poems and meditations of which this book is made up—and these belong to the earlier period of his life—Gibran sings in the main of the sorrow of Love and the love of sorrow.

> ...he
> Who is seared and cleansed once with his
> Own tears will remain pure forevermore.

His attitude is always: "I can no longer act as barrier to genuine and eternal love, embraced by the enfolded arms of God." Hence he feels a stranger in the world, in which people are the "slaves of life," burning incense before the idol which is "naught but earth fashioned by Satan and erected upon a knoll of skulls."

And who is this Satan? The creator, sustainer and saviour of the church and the clergy, who trample upon the ignorant by keeping them away from the love of light. As Satan here says sarcastically to the Reverend Father, "Do you not realize that you will starve to death if I were to die?" And the mystic-poet reminds the priest that

> Jesus was not a bird with broken wings;
> He was a raging tempest who broke all crooked wings....
> He came to make the human heart a temple and the soul an altar, and the mind a priest.

There is an atmosphere of all time about his penetrating insight into, and exposition of, the mystery of existence. His idiom has the irony and edge of Truth. And as one lays aside the book one seems to hearken to the echo of the teaching of the ancients in the words of Amena Divine, "...he who sees his real self sees the truth of real life for himself, for all humanity, and for all things."

G. M.

Hindu Psychology. By SWAMI AKHILANANDA. (Harper and Bros., New York and London. $2.50); *Cross-roads of Science and Philosophy*. By ATINDRANATH BOSE (D. M. Library, Calcutta. Rs. 4/-)

No two books could be more unlike than these to all outward appearance yet in their depths so completely at one in regard to their ultimate aim. The former probes the inner self to discover therein the secret of all existence, human as well as a-human; the latter subjects the achievements of the human mind in the fields of science, philosophy and sociology to unsparing critical analysis. The former is psychologically motivated; the latter is inspired by sociological considerations. But both find in the loftiest spiritual attainments of India the only safe and trustworthy bedrock for anchoring the hopes and aspirations of bewildered humanity in the present crisis.

Swami Akhilananda subjects Western psychology to searching analysis, and reveals its defects in aims as well as in methods. Objective study of bodily behaviour and of the structure and function of the mind has its legitimate rôle, no doubt, in modern science. But man's whole nature is not exhausted by such a study. Beyond the body, and beyond the mind, too—there is the SELF, the unchangeable reality. The approach to this *self* is through the superconscious, unknown to Western psychology. The goal of this pursuit is the realisation of the oneness of self and all other selves with the Universal Self. To one who has attained this goal the secrets of matter, mind, life and society stand revealed completely, and only he is competent to be a leader in the modern world. Every other leader is an apt example of the blind leading the blind. *Hindu Psychology* should be studied by those who believe that psychological knowledge is the monopoly of the West.

Dr. Atindranath Bose is in search of safeguards and direction for "power" which has "the dangerous propensity to kill its master." Can the safeguards be found in ethics, values and religion? Can religion be rationalised into a safe guide for knowledge and power towards supreme good? It can, and the means thereof are found by Dr. Bose in a surprisingly novel and vigorous re-interpretation of Hindu thought.

Dr. Bose surveys first the vast panorama of European philosophy, and finds that none of the *'isms* open "the sweeping vision to encompass the manifold truth or reality of existence. They also lack practical value." The author then turns to Dialectical Materialism, and gives a penetrating and devastating scientific analysis of this semi-mystical political dogma which wears the guise of a ravishing siren, but is a hollow shell emitting poison.

Finally Dr. Bose seeks refuge in Indian thought. His vigorous mind excavates the "lost heritage." He holds that the worst tragedy that has overtaken Indian culture is the loss of "the huge mass of positive, pragmatic knowledge embedded in the Vedas and Upanishads." Their rational, empirical, social doctrines should be resuscitated. In them lies hope for the world today.

A challenging work, this, meriting careful study by scholars and those longing to become leaders.

P. S. NAIDU

The Huang Po Doctrine of Universal Mind. Translated by CHU CH'AN. (The Buddhist Society, London. W. C. 1. 2*s.* 6*d.*)

The origin of the Dhyāna sect is obscure, but its tenets may have been first formulated by Bodhidharma, the last of the twenty-eight Indian patriarchs, who came to China about 520 A.D. He declared that religion was not to be learnt from books, but that man must seek and find the Buddha in his own heart; that real merit lay not in works, but solely in purity and wisdom duly combined. The well-known scholar Hu Shih is inclined to discredit the Bodhidharma tradition, and thinks that the writings of his successors are forgeries of a later date. Chu Ch'an, the editor and translator of the present treatise, takes a middle view: his opinion is that dhyāna, "meditation" or "concentration," was always held to be essential by Buddhists, but that in course of time such activities as good works, the reading of sūtras, and other observances, came to be regarded as of equal or even greater importance. The teaching of the early Taoist sages, however, predisposed many Chinese thinkers in favour of dhyāna pure and simple, and hence this form of Buddhism found ready acceptance throughout the country.

The aim of all Buddhism is to attain enlightenment by coming to realize the falsity of distinctions and the identity of opposites in the Absolute (or Universal Mind), and the followers of most Buddhist sects are trained to progress slowly towards this end, through a multitude of reincarnations. The peculiarity of the Dhyāna sect is that it provides a short cut for those who are capable of taking it. Since we are already one with the Absolute, all that is necessary is to become suddenly aware of that oneness. This, it is held, will immediately put an end to the chain of cause and effect which is responsible for our continued rebirths.

That is a very brief summary of Chu Ch'an's preliminary remarks on the teaching of Hsi Yün, who lived on the Huang Po mountain in Kiangsi during the ninth century. How different this teaching was from the popular Buddhism of his time soon becomes apparent. Acts of charity, he says, may be performed on occasion, but only for their own sake, without any idea of reward, or even enlightenment, accruing therefrom. Now, any colophon to a Buddhist sūtra such as we find in the manuscripts recovered from Tunhuang will show that the whole purpose of copying these sūtras is the acquisition of merit (which may be transferred to others), leading to rebirth in a higher plane than the present.

The translator has not only acquitted himself well of a difficult task but has also supplied much illuminating commentary of his own.

LIONEL GILES

The Great Fog, and Other Weird Tales. By GERALD HEARD. (Cassell and Co., Ltd., London. 8*s.* 6*d.*)

Mr. Gerald Heard is an expert story-teller. His sense of atmosphere is uncanny, he has a flair for the eerie and the bizarre, and he has quite a few choice instruments in his technical armoury. The murderer in 'The Crayfish' is one of the most ingenious of criminals; the feline hero of 'The Cat, I AM' is a queer Mephistophelean con-

coction; 'The Swap' and 'The Rousing of Mr. Bradegear' are disturbing blends of fact and fantasy; and 'Vindicae Flammae' is somewhat of a macabre foot-note to Dostoevsky's 'The Grand Inquisitor.' The remaining four pieces, for all their weirdness, have a core of serious purpose which leaves the reader wistful, and more than wistful—hopeful! 'Dromenon' is an attempt to describe the world-stair, the higher rungs of consciousness, what Sri Aurobindo has called 'the kingdoms and godheads of the greater life.' Sylvester Shelbourne has an extraordinary experience in a Gothic cathedral, and he is made to realize that Gothic is 'more a rite than an architecture,' that it is indeed 'a therapy in stone.' In the three brilliant futuristic studies—'The Great Fog,' 'Wingless Victory' and 'Eclipse'—Mr. Heard seems to be preoccupied with the fate of Homo Sapiens. Thanks to the atomic bomb and the other marvels of this Age of Technology, we are veritably heading straight towards Annihilation. Is there no hope for the future, then? The Penguins' "Shangri-la" in 'Wingless Victory' is a Utopia—where man has failed, the Penguins would appear to have succeeded! In 'The Great Fog,' Nature obligingly takes away Man's present unlimited freedom of movement; in 'Eclipse,' Nature strikes mankind partially blind; and either way, Homo Sapiens learns a lesson in humility. The 'fog' relieves him of his present fever and fret, and the 'eclipse,' by blinding him, makes way for a rich social life, and even the blind, seeing inwardly, become 'seers' like the bard-poets of earth's nonage. Certainly these four stories grip the reader as stories; but they do something more, they articulate as well a pertinent message for our fear-haunted times. Power without vision has been our ruin; and when we have learned our lesson in humility, once more the Great Ordainer, giving us back movement and sight, may tell us: "Try again. The Second Flood is over. Go forth and replenish the earth, and this time remember that you are all one." Do we need another 'Flood' than Hitler's war to reinforce the penance or reiterate the message?

K. R. SRINIVASA IYENGAR

The Story of Jawaharlal as told to Kum Kum. By SHAKUNTALA MASANI. Illustrated. (Geoffrey Cumberlege, Oxford University Press, Indian Branch, Bombay. Rs. 3/8)

A more delightfully written biography for the child reader than this would be hard to find. The author's spirited and clever drawings are not the smallest factor in its charm. Children in India, where Jawaharlal is a household word, will have an initial advantage in approach, but any child will be fascinated by the story and must unconsciously absorb, along with the hero's boyish pranks and the fanciful adventures of the animal friends of his prison years, something of the inspiration of quiet courage in the self-forgetful service of a noble cause.

It must, however, be regretted that Mrs. Masani implies that the youthful Jawahar's ardour for Theosophy had made him for a time "a self-conscious little prig." What Jawaharlal contacted was a somewhat narrow expression of neo-theosophy, and it was not surprising that he soon parted company with it. We feel certain that genuine Theosophy could have given much of light and of steadying strength for the walking of the difficult and often lonely path which he has trodden and has still to tread.

E. M. H.

Ātmabodha or Self-Knowledge. Edited by SWAMI NIKHILANANDA. (Sri Rāmakrishna Math, Mylapore, Madras 4. Rs. 4/-)

The *Ātmabodha*, a short but highly important text of the Kevalādvaita school of Vedānta, is ascribed to Śankarācārya. As this treatise gives the fundamental teaching of the Vedānta in sixty-eight easy and melodious verses, it became very popular and several editions of it appeared in India and Europe. The oldest (1852) was by Fitzedward Hall. The present edition by Swami Nikhilānanda of the New York Rāmakrishna-Vivekananda Centre contains the original Sanskrit text with a literal English translation and copious notes, based on the traditional interpretation of the Vedānta. Contemplation on a verse of this Self-Knowledge every day will surely bring the much-needed spiritual solace and peace to an individual troubled by the worries of this too materialistic world.

The Appendix contains sixteen popular hymns to Śiva, Vīśṇu, Bhavāni and other Hindu gods and goddesses, also ascribed to Śankarācārya, and truly remarkable for their lucidity, their melodious diction and their devotional fervour. The accompanying metrical English translations, though not always literal, have faithfully preserved the spirit of the original.

The 150-page Introduction is a feature which greatly enhances the value of this edition. It gives in an easy style an exhaustive exposition of the doctrine of Absolute Monism or Kevalādvaita Vedānta as taught by Śankarācārya and his learned followers. It can be recommended as a suitable handbook to any one seeking an easy but authoritative introduction to the great Vedāntic philosophy.

The book ends with a glossary of Vedāntic technical terms with clear and concise explanations.

N. A. GORE

The Holy Heretics. By EDMOND HOLMES. (Thinker's Library, Watts and Co., Ltd., London. 2*s.* 6*d.*)

Nothing becomes so quickly tedious as records of atrocities, a generalization that will be confronted at once by the curious vitality of such books as Fox's *Book of Martyrs*, which is composed of little else.

The heretical sect which flourished over a long period of time in the Middle Ages, and spread from the Balkans to Languedoc, was subjected to a wholesale massacre by the Church during the Papacy of Pope Innocent III, a fanatical and ignorant pontiff rather than a sadistic criminal, but the late Mr. Holmes, in his balanced, objective survey of this strange movement, does not expatiate upon this aspect of his story as too many who have written upon it have done. He prefers to present the reader with all any one but a specialist needs to know of these people who were, in fact, far better Christians than the professors of the orthodox faith who fell upon and slaughtered them.

The massacres by those who were incited by the Church against the Cathars, or Albigensians, annihilated these sectaries, but slaughter is no remedy against undesirable or undesired ideas, and the cult of these fanatics —and they were fanatics—had an influence upon European civilization and upon the doctrines of the Church that has been glossed and put out of sight by those who preferred to forget its origin.

What was the central doctrine of this Church? It was that of dualism, not unlike the teaching of Mani in many respects, and in its acceptance of metempsychosis, bearing some resemblance to that theology which Socrates is reported by Phædo as having set out in the short hours before his death. The Cathars believed in transmigration —a link with Buddhism.

Not one God but two, a God of goodness, and a God of evil, that was the doctrine. And two worlds, separate and divided: The world of the Evil One's creation, the world of men and beasts and vegetation; and that other, immaterial and of the spirit. Neither God being omnipotent, creation was envisaged as pursuing the path of endemic war. That is a crude presentation of the creed of Cathars, but it must suffice here.

Though they were accused of every imaginable abomination, there would appear to be plentiful historical evidence that they imposed a rigid moral code upon their adherents, a code in striking contrast with the profligacy of the orthodox priesthood and of society during the centuries when the cult flourished.

The Cathars were exterminated, but their teaching has left upon Christianity a mark that must remain so long as such rites as extreme unction are deemed to possess supernatural power.

For many readers this small book will open up a very wide vista of that blood-stained story which is the history of the Roman Catholic Church.

GEORGE GODWIN

Letters of Sri Aurobindo. (Sri Aurobindo Circle, Nair Hospital Compound, Bombay. Rs. 6/-).

Sri Aurobindo's approach to, and his ethics and "economy" of, Yoga are often briefly described as "divinisation":—

> This yoga is not a rejection of life or of closeness and intimacy between the Divine and the Sadhakas. Its ideal aims at the greatest closeness and unity on the physical as well as the other planes, at the most divine largeness and fullness and joy of life.

And the Divine has three aspects: (*a*) It is the Cosmic Self or Spirit that is in and behind all things and beings; (*b*) It is the Spirit and Master of our own being within us; and (*c*) the Divine is transcendent Being and Spirit, all bliss and light and divine knowledge and power.

Man's contact with this Divine in its three aspects is through absolute self-surrender, which means opening one's own consciousness, through the cultivated quiescence of the physical, vital, mental and psychic parts of his nature, to the superconscient. But the path is uncharted and the progress to this outpost, within the individual himself, of the All-Knowing Spirit is beset with dangers and difficulties. The teacher, in the *Letters* under review, has given not only the *raison d'être* of the latter and pointed the way to their removal, but has also given a map of the meandering region of the Spirit as well.

The letters have been classified under eight headings. The followers of the Path will therefore find in these *Letters* the requisite direction at every turning, ascent or descent or digression in their journey and, taking heart, continue their quest. For from them they will know the why and wherefore of the ways and wonders of the Spirit.

G. M.

ENDS AND SAYINGS

" _____ *ends of verse*
And sayings of philosophers."
HUDIBRAS

The first Resolution passed at the postponed Constructive Workers' Conference, held at Wardha from March 13th to 15th, over which Gandhiji was to have presided, rightly placed the blame for his assassination on " wrong education and narrow communal ideas which foster hostility and discrimination between man and man." The eradication of the communal poison from India's social life was recognised as the most pressing problem.

The most important outcome of the Conference was the setting up of the Sarvodaya Samaj, a unique organisation, tenuous on the organisational side and yet committed to a concrete aim :

> To strive towards a society based on truth and non-violence, in which there will be no distinction of caste or creed, no opportunity for exploitation and full scope for development...for individuals as well as groups.

A strong point of the Samaj is its freedom from a rigid frame-work. It is a purely advisory body, maintaining a register of server members. It is not designed as an executive body because its founders recognise the danger taught by the history of previous reforms in which the spirit of the teacher has been smothered in the dogmatism of his surviving followers. The Samaj specifically disclaims the rôle of interpreter of what Gandhiji's teachings meant, while encouraging their study and practical adoption. Wisely, the only bond between the members is to be their common faith in his teachings and the effort to apply them.

A committee was set up to co-ordinate the constructive organisations working along the lines of Gandhiji's programme, in consultation with them. They are not isolated lines of effort. The promotion of inter-communal friendship, the removal of untouchability, the promotion of cottage industries, of basic education and of village sanitation, and relief work for refugees, tie in with each other and with the numerous other lines mentioned in a Resolution of the Conference. The way is left open for the indefinite expansion of the lines of effort as the constructive programme expands and deepens.

At the Conference Shri Vinoba Bhave raised the issue of pure and non-violent means to secure even a lofty end, which Gandhiji had so often stressed. Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru agreed in principle, but pointed to the statesman's difficulties in applying the principle strictly in practice. As a Minister, he said, though he did not want war, he had to talk about preparations for war. Maulana Abul Kalam Azad probably expressed the mind of the Conference when he declared

> that the mind of India was ill and the only remedy to remove that illness was the one prescribed by Gandhiji, in trying to administer which he had laid down his life.

The wide-spread unrest and intransigeance of Indian youth, the legacy doubtless of the excitement of the Freedom struggle, was recognised at the Conference as a danger. Pandit

Nehru wondered what had come over youth. "Do they think they can snatch power by drills and dandas?" If we believed in these methods, he warned, our freedom might not last long. That menace should be met to a great extent by the decision of the Conference to organise a "Shanti Sena" or Peace Service and "Shanti Seva Dals," to create peace and good-will so that communal disturbances might not arise. If communal riots occurred the duty of the members of the Shanti Seva Dal would be to throw themselves unarmed between the fighting forces, thus reducing the intensity of the clashes. This programme should appeal especially to the gallantry and courage of youth and should go far to bring about the necessary atmosphere of peace.

We hope that by the first Annual Mela of the Sarvodaya Samaj, to be held on the anniversary of Gandhiji's martyrdom, the concerted moves against the communal menace will already have shown tangible results.

The Indian Parliament adopted on April 3rd a significant resolution denying to any communal organisation the right to engage in any activities other than those essential for the *bona fide* religious, cultural, social and educational needs of the community, excepting by an amendment educational and social activities for outsiders.

In accepting this resolution which should effectively ban communal politics, Pandit Nehru said that, while the combination of ethics with politics had been adopted in principle, there could be no doubt that "the combination of politics and of religion in the narrowest sense," was "a most dangerous combination and must be put an end to."

He mentioned forcefully in his speech the larger and deeper democracy in terms of which people were thinking today. It was the accepted policy of the Government, for example, to lessen the big hiatus between those at the top and those at the bottom of the ladder.

People, I suppose, will differ to some extent always—all human beings are not equal in the sense of ability or capacity—but the whole point is that people should have equality of opportunity and that they should be able to go as far as they can go.

He thought that external props, like the reservation of seats in the Legislature, would permanently help the unfortunate less than would "real educational, cultural and economic advance, which gives them inner strength to face any difficulty or any opponent." He felt that the less reservation of seats was provided in the Indian Constitution the better. He was convinced that in an independent State, a minority which sought to isolate itself injured not only the State but, even more, its own interests.

The mover of the resolution, Shri Anantasayanam Iyengar, brought out in his speech that the divorce of politics from religion was in the interest of the religion itself.

All great prophets had preached the brotherhood of man. But once a political complexion was given to religion, there was an end to all progress in that religion.

Pandit Nehru's broadcast from Delhi on April 4th in connection with the Chicago University's round-table radio programme aptly came a few days after Shri Vinoba Bhave had emphasised in a speech at Rajghat the wholesome influence that a peaceful non-violent India could have over the nations heading for catastrophe.

Of the many crises that faced humanity today, Pandit Nehru said, perhaps the greatest was that of the human spirit, but it could be resolved by trying to rid ourselves of fear—that ignoble emotion leading to blind strife, —and basing thoughts and actions on what was essentially right and moral.

He summarised Gandhiji's contribution to world peace. He had taught the positive efficacy of non-violence for the peaceful solution of international differences. "He showed us that the human spirit is more powerful than the mightiest of armaments." He had applied moral values to political action and insisted on the inseparability of ends and means. Impractical? Other methods had failed repeatedly and "nothing can be less practical than to pursue a method that has failed again and again."

It was the essence of the ancient teaching of Karma that Pandit Nehru gave when, after referring to the terrible destiny which, it almost seemed, drove humanity to ever-recurring disaster, he added: "We are all entangled in the mesh of past history and cannot escape the consequences of past evil."

There was no remedy for the world's sickness other than World Government. He had no doubt that it must and would come. But he felt that there was something essentially lacking in our approach. It might not be possible today to ignore human limitations or even to rule out war altogether, but, he said:—

> I have become more and more convinced that so long as we do not recognise the supremacy of the moral law in our national and international relations, we shall have no enduring peace. So long as we do not adhere to right means, the end will not be right and fresh evil will flow from it. That was the essence of Gandhiji's message and mankind will have to appreciate it in order to see and act clearly.

It is encouraging to find a paper of the standing of *The Hindu* coming out strongly against the death penalty for murder. Its leader of March 29th, based on the Criminal Justice Bill before the British Parliament, reviews the general provisions of that penal reform bill and its amendment which proposes to suspend capital punishment experimentally for five years.

"The case for abolition, as it has been presented in the Commons, is an extremely strong one," remarks the editor, who mentions the statistical evidence for a decline in the murder rate where the death penalty has been given up, the encouragement which a sensational trial may give to unstable people to commit murder, and the fact that people later proved innocent have been executed. There are many more which might be adduced, including the brutalising of those concerned in the execution, the denial of a chance to reform and the untoward effect upon society of the release of an active and often malevolent potency or influence which is none-the-less real for being mental and emotional in character. The leader concludes:—

> The whole debate has attracted great public interest in Britain and should be carefully studied by those in this country who are anxious that the death penalty here should not be imposed for murder but only for treason against the State.

We deplore this exception as opening the door to Fascist tyranny. The blood-baths of Germany and of Russia should have taught us all that "Off with his head!" is not the right solution for our differences. It is all too easy to see a traitor in a political opponent. The India of Gandhiji cannot too soon

discard capital punishment altogether —and also its only less degrading and hideous congener, whipping, which sets at naught the dignity of man as man.

Dr. Arthur Blakeslee, well-known plant geneticist, was an American Delegate to the Indian Science Congress which met at Delhi early last year, and later lectured in several cities. He sums up his "Impressions of India" in *The Scientific Monthly* for February 1948. More people are eager for others' frank opinion of them than altogether relish it when given. It is gratifying that Dr. Blakeslee generously felt that he got more here than he gave in adult education. It comes, however, as something of a shock to read that he became convinced that Indians were not mentally inferior as he had been led to believe. It puts us, nevertheless, in a suitably chastened mood for the constructive criticism which Dr. Blakeslee offers. The greatest fault he could find with Indian scientists, he writes, was "a certain disinclination to use their hands." He found in their "lack of appreciation of the dignity of manual labour as well as[in] the caste system ...a great handicap to their technological advancement."

Perhaps as valuable a thing as any that I told Indian scientists with whom I had conversations was that I helped my wife wipe the dishes in our own household. The willingness to do—even at times the necessity of doing—things with one's own hands would be one of the best lessons, I feel, that could be learned by Indians who visit our country.

Americans have, no doubt, an advantage in that respect, thanks to their pioneer and democratic tradition and the scarcity of servants in their country, but respect for any honest toil is not peculiar to Americans. Tolstoy was convinced of the importance of manual labour to mental peace—a view which subsequent psychologists confirm—and laboured on the land and as a bootmaker. Mediæval India had her tradition of the dignity of work. Was not Kabir a weaver, and Namdeo a tailor? And have we not had in our day the teaching and example of Gandhiji? We must repudiate the distorted standards that judge the dignity of a man by his work, and set up false distinctions between hand labour and white-collar posts.

Happily Dr. Blakeslee returned to America "with a great enthusiasm for our Indian friends and a strong feeling that India is a land of great potential power."

We welcome the decision of those responsible for resuming the publication of *Harijan*. Its suspension was understandable but its resumption assures us that a sincere and steadfast endeavour is to be made to sustain the great work of Gandhiji. Shri Vallabhbhai Patel on behalf of the Trustees opens the first new number, of 4th April 1948, announcing that the serious responsibilities of the Editor are to be borne by that tried servant of the country—K. G. Mashruwala. As a close and intimate friend, follower and co-worker of Gandhiji, we doubt not that Shri Mashruwala will discharge his onerous duties with the fearless intellectual honesty mellowed by sympathy, insight and brotherliness which is characteristic of him. His editorial in this issue, "With Trust in God," strikes the note of his policy: it is to bring the country to God—"We have run away from him." Readers of THE ARYAN PATH are familiar with Shri Mashruwala, whose contributions have graced its pages; the latest of these was in our April issue. We greet our esteemed old friend on his assuming the grave responsibility of the editorship of Gandhiji's *Harijan*.